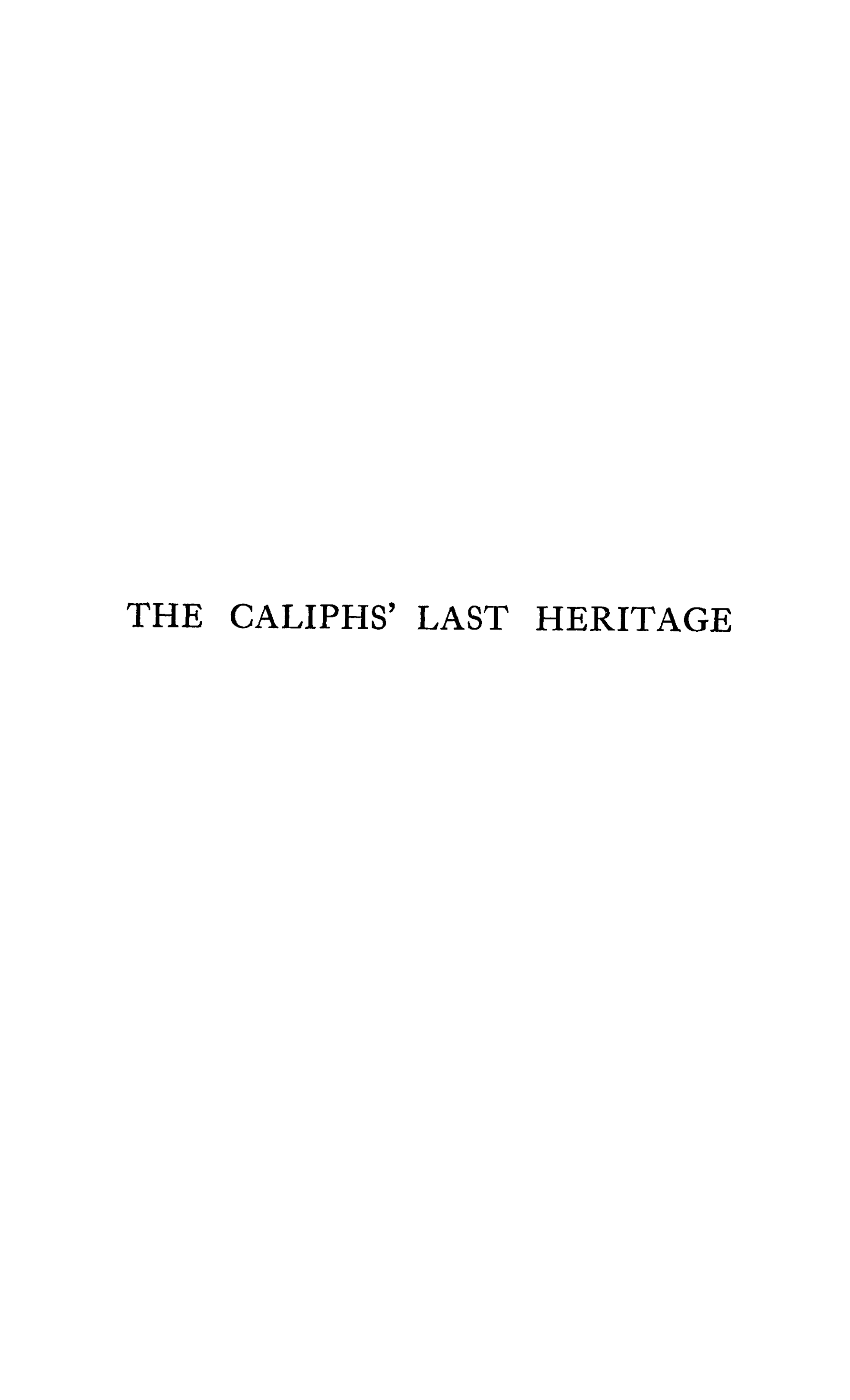
# THE CALIPHS' LAST HERITAGE

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE





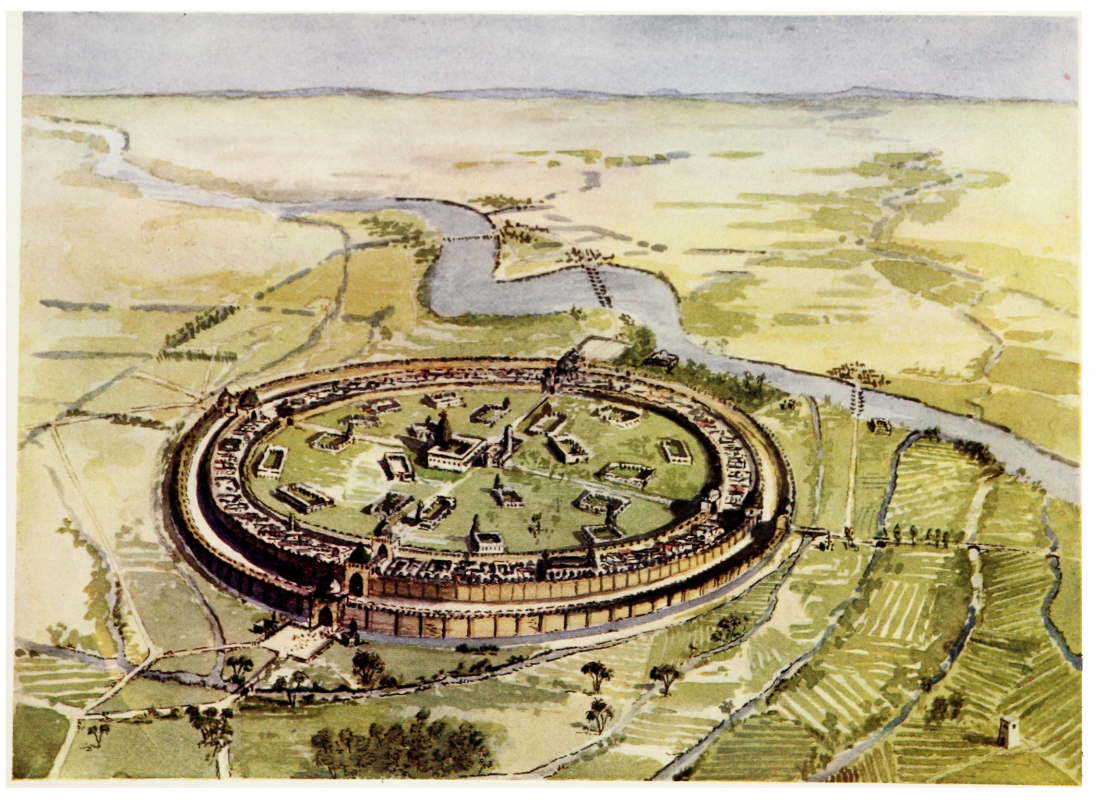
THE CALIPHS' LAST HERITAGE



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Baghdad in the days of Mansur
*(Painted by Mr. Edmund Sandars)*



[*After Frontispiece.*

LADY SYKES.

# THE CALIPHS' LAST HERITAGE

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE

BY

LT.-COL. SIR MARK SYKES, BART., M.P.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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1915

# PREFACE

OWING to my husband's absence on active service there has been some difficulty in bringing out this book, and for the same reason it has not been possible to include any photographs in the journey book except those of the 1907 journey. For this omission I ask the reader's indulgence.

I also take this opportunity of thanking Mr. E. C. Blech, C.M.G., for his kindness and invaluable help in reading the proofs and correcting the spelling of the Turkish and Arabic names.

EDITH SYKES.

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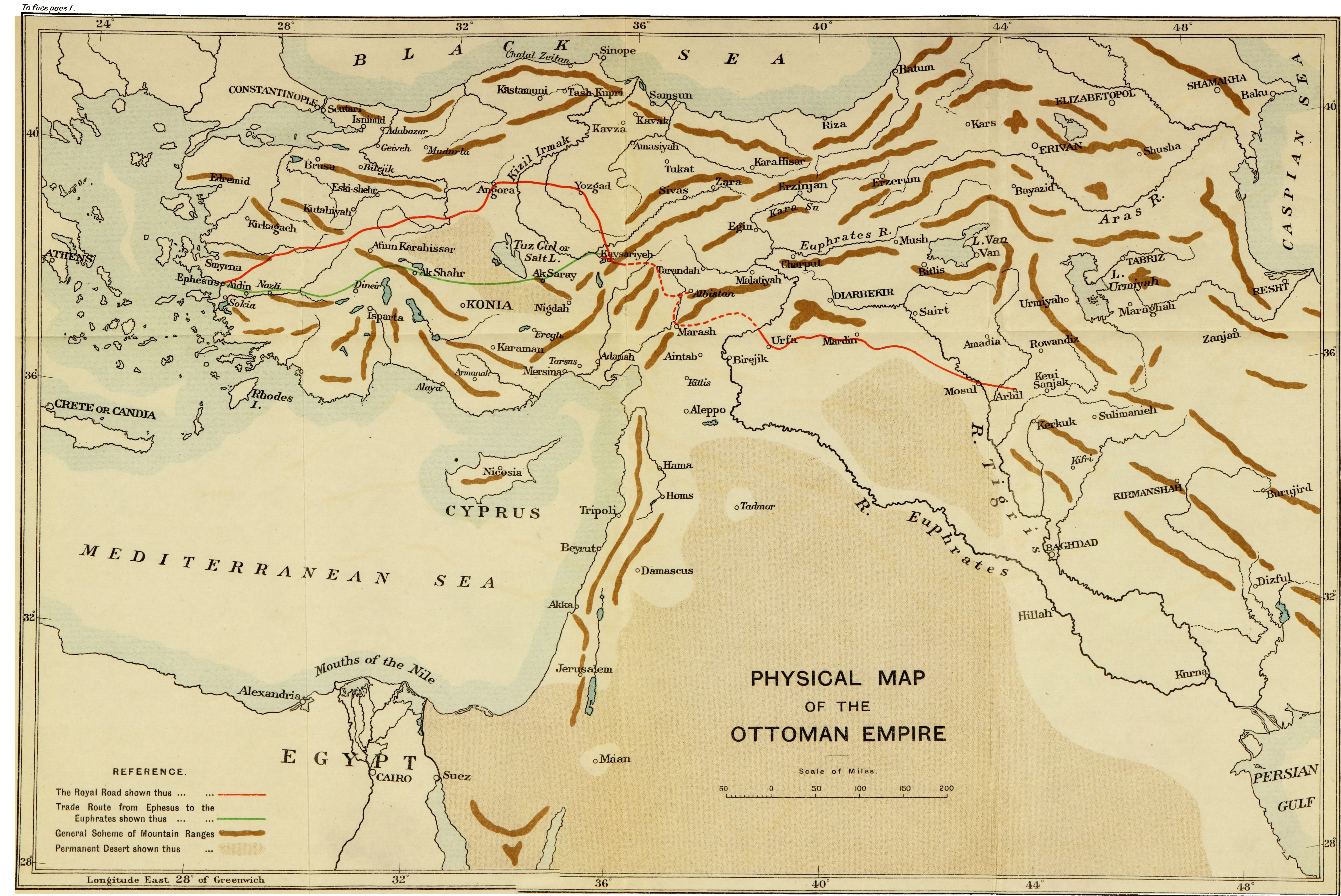
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# THE CALIPHS' LAST HERITAGE

## PART I—HISTORICAL SKETCH

### CHAPTER I

#### GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS

HERE is a land of contrasts, climates, barriers, and diverse physical circumstances. It has been the birthplace of civilisation, has given the world the Gospel and the Koran, has seen the rise and decline of four great Empires and scores of principalities and dynasties. It has been the battle-ground of all the philosophies and creeds which form the basis of those now occupying western minds, as well as the highway of all conquerors from Xerxes to Napoleon. The fact that the decisive historical events which have occurred within the Asiatic Provinces of the Sultan are those which have moulded the whole of the spiritual and material destinies of mankind, should give us food for reflection. There is nothing in our daily private or public life to-day which is not directly or indirectly influenced by some human movement that took place in this zone.

Men complain of the Ottoman Empire, and bewail its ruins, its wastes, its government, its neglected resources. Yet they should have charity, for this land is an old mother worn with travail and labour. Look back as far as you will, strife, struggle, strain—ethical, physical and economic—is the picture constantly imprinted on the mind. It is to the historical bases

of the present state of this region that I will endeavour to devote these introductory chapters.

To appreciate the composition and problems of the Ottoman Empire in Asia, it is necessary to make an impartial and general study of its past history; and unfortunately that history has yet to be written.

The fact that such a volume has never been produced is responsible for many of the misconceptions which exist in the minds of those Europeans who control the diverse and conflicting policies which entangle themselves round Constantinople. How many people realise, when they speak of Turkey and the Turks, that there is no such place and no such people in the sense that there are such countries and such peoples as Prussia and the Prussians, Scotland and the Scotch? As a matter of fact—

(1). There is an Ottoman Empire, a Turkish dynasty, a Turkish language.

(2). The people of the Empire are Moslems, Christians, Jews, and Pagans.

(3). The Moslems speak Turkish, two kinds of Kurdish, and Arabic; the Christians, Armenian, Greek, Arabic and Chaldaean.

(4). The official language of the Empire is Turkish; the religious language of the Moslems is Arabic.

(5). The system of government is the direct successor of that of Constantine, yet its prestige is based on the theocratic method of the Caliphs and the patriarchal plan of an obscure nomadic tribe.

To put oneself in a position to appreciate the internal and external problems of the Ottoman Empire in Asia, he should not only make a study of the existing situation, but also examine the material and moral predispositions which brought it about.

A brief geographical survey without any detailed reference to the human side of the question is the first essential. Certain physical features of the area occupied by the Ottoman Empire are the cardinal points upon which its fateful history has turned, and must be carefully examined before even a beginning can be made of understanding either what has happened, is happening, or may happen in the future.

A glance at the map shows us two peninsulas jutting out from

a continent. The two peninsulas and the portion of the continent which joins them now comprise practically the whole of the dominions of the Sultan. The peninsula of Asia Minor is a highland plateau furrowed for the most part by parallel ridges running east and west; the peninsula of Arabia is a barren table-land bounded by burning seas on its shores and by pebbly scrubby wastes upon the north; while the continental region between Asia Minor and Arabia is a low table-land sloping downward to the Persian Gulf, upheld on the north by the Taurus, on the west by the Lebanon, and on the east by the mountain-chain of the Persian frontier, and intersected by the Tigris and Euphrates, which are wholly fed by the highland snows of Armenia, Asia Minor, and Kurdistan.

Within the limited space of the Asiatic provinces we find contrasts of climate and scenery, therefore, in some degree preparing us for the variations of race and character which distinguish its inhabitants. In Arabia lies a region nearly as large as the Sahara, with the climate of the Sahara; Mesopotamia is a land larger than Egypt, with the sun and wind of Egypt; Syria is a country as large as Italy, with the olive and vine of Italy; the Black Sea coast forms a chain of provinces as big as Bavaria, with forests undistinguishable from those of South Germany; Armenia's winter, more severe than that of Switzerland, is a fitting contrast to the coasts of the Marmora and Aegean, where the conditions of the French Riviera are reduplicated with astonishing exactness. A Spaniard, a Negro, a Scotchman, a Russian, and a Hindu from Calcutta could any one of them find a resting-place in Turkey-in-Asia, where the weather and scenery at least would present nothing unfamiliar to him.

Such being the general conformation of the area included in this territory, certain particular features are worthy of careful consideration. The wedge-shaped Syrian desert and the Sinai peninsula separate Syria from the Euphrates Valley and Egypt, and at the same time shut off Arabia from the rest of the world. The Taurus passes are closed in winter and form a complete barrier to all but temporary intercourse between the peninsula of Asia Minor and anything to the south. The arid mountains of the Turco-Persian frontier, pierced only by two passes, form a

permanent but narrow interval between the Tigris and the rest of Asia. The ranges of Armenia, Kurdistan, and Asia Minor run east and west, while those of Syria run north and south; hence all permanent communications are forced to pass in lines parallel with, and not at right angles to, the coast. In the same way the Tigris and the Euphrates bisect but do not traverse Mesopotamia.

These general dispositions are further supplemented by the following subsidiary factors. Northern Arabia is so sparsely covered with subsistence that movement is necessary if any living creature is to maintain life. The great twin rivers of Mesopotamia, deriving as they do the whole volume of their water from distant mountains, can only fertilise their banks by artificial help. The valleys of Syria and Anatolia are not only natural highways, but isolated ribbons of fertile soil without lateral communications. The severe winter of the highlands imposes migration or hibernation as the alternative conditions of life. The temperate zone of the coasts is limited by the frowning ranges of littoral mountains, which line the sea-side from Haifa to Smyrna, Smyrna to Constantinople, and from Constantinople to Batum.

Enough has already been said to show that geography alone is a sufficient guarantee of variety; let us now see how the various natural circumstances mould the destinies of the survivors of the births and strifes of ages. Beginning with the Arabian wastes, it is obvious enough that where the desert is men must move. In the desert everything moves, and that which cannot move dies because water is occasional and rare, rain seasonal, and pasture precarious. The gazelle wanders by day, the hyæna wanders by night, the vulture and eagle sweep in circles of hundreds of miles. The seeds travel on the wind, and only spring into life when they strike soft moist soil. So from all ages have the desert men been wanderers—not as gypsies who are landless parasites and outcasts, but as folk who must move by the decree of fate. It is not strange that a man who lives in a desert—where there is one day, one night, one silence, one sky and one horizon—should know that there is one God. Indeed no townsman, no European, can live for any appreciable time in a desert without becoming intuitively aware

of a fact which may seem doubtful in the midst of the distractions of a crowded city, a various agriculture, or an abundant jungle.

That a man who lives in a desert should be a herdsman is equally inevitable; there can only be one life in a desert, and that is the life of a man who moves behind things that move. The horse, the camel, the sheep, and the goat are the only things that man can drive fast enough, and find food enough for, in the desert. One or two other considerations must not be lost sight of. First, the only kind of man who would live in a desert is one who prizes boundless liberty above any ordinary creature comfort. Those who either flee civilisation for the desert and stay there, or being born in a desert remain there, are not the weak remnants of conquered races—like Ainus, Basques, and Iberians—such as one finds in remote islands, on unfrequented mountain-tops, or in inaccessible chinks and worthless crannies of the earth, but men with the qualities of independence and endurance. Again, because the full meal is rare in a desert, and speedy movement a necessity, we get a hungry man who can travel; and such a one is a natural and rapacious raider. Still further, the tribal system and patriarchal government are the natural terms of existence in the desert, and carry with them as corollaries the instinct of war for common defence and common gain, the instinct of compromise in the settlement of private and general quarrels, and the instinct of debate, argument, and negotiation as the means of reaching compromise.

Therefore we have it as a certainty that the inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula must of necessity have always been nomads, shepherds, raiders, politicians, and diplomatists by instinct.

Let us now turn to the coast. From Jaffa right away to Batum the littoral, with its mild climate, is continuously bounded by the unending mountain ranges, so that we get a long narrow strip of coastland cut off from easy communication with the interior by forests, snows, and cruel passes, yet but slightly varying in climate throughout its extent, and closely and easily related by the sea. In all ages, the development of transit being on an equal plane—*i.e.* from the camel and galley to the steamer and mountain railway—it has required

less time and energy to take a ton of men or materials from Beyrut to Smyrna by sea, than from Beyrut to Rakka by land. It is not surprising, therefore, that the people of the coast should have but little in common with those of the interior, should be by nature seamen and merchants, should spring from sea-borne colonists, and that wherever the littoral chain breaks inland, thus enlarging coast conditions, we should find centres of wealth and civilisation wholly alien to anything we may find elsewhere.

Passing from the coast to the interior of the highland peninsula, we find immediate distinctions of circumstance in Asia Minor and Armenia.

In Asia Minor a small central desert has throughout the ages formed an obstacle to communication between the peoples of the north and south; but more than this—whether folk dwelt north or south of this island of barrenness—they must needs dwell in valleys. Valley-dwellers are separated from each other, have each their own centres of commerce, their own strictly defined limits of cultivation. Moreover, they must necessarily be semi-nomadic, because when the harvest is over and the midsummer parches the lowland plain or breeds fever and mosquitoes from the swamps, the hills are green, the forests shady and inviting, the highland airs are cool. When bitter winter whitens the mountain-tops, the valleys are brown and warm; when the hungry wolves prowl through the forest there is safety in the village below. Therefore so long as there is room to move from the valley to the mountain in spring, and from the highland to the lowland in autumn, so long will valley-dwellers be people with seasonal stations and dwellings. Here then is a second series of natural circumstances affecting, with inevitable certainty, whatever races settle either in the northern or southern valleys of Asia Minor. They must live in separate communities, and a large proportion must be semi-nomadic.

Turning to Armenia, we find a table-land intersected with broad fertile plains and ridged with rough stretches of highland pasture. The plains are rich, the mountains are poor. The former are the natural resting-places of an industrial race of agriculturists; the highlands, the inevitable summer-quarters of pastoral peoples and their flocks. Consequently Armenia

develops two distinct forms of human life, the farmer and the shepherd—not, as in Anatolia, farmer-shepherds or shepherd-farmers owing to the narrowness of the valleys producing a fusion between the two occupations, but two types of men following means of livelihood quite apart from one another. There is, generally speaking, no natural tendency to fusion even during the cold season, because the winter is so severe that shepherds are driven southwards towards Mesopotamia rather than to the arable plains; while the summer is so brief that men working in the plains have practically the whole of the period of open weather occupied in agricultural work. The natural effect of these geographical dispositions is to produce a permanent agricultural population in the plains who work all the summer and live indoors all the winter, and a migratory population on the highlands who appear in late spring and return southwards before the first snowfall.

Another great factor in the historical development of this region is that the broad plains run east and west and are easy of access by commerce, ideas, or armies coming either from Asia or Europe, but not from either Mesopotamia or the Black Sea. Finally, Armenia has in her mountains three great refuges—rough, inaccessible districts where communications are intensely difficult, but where life may be maintained by agricultural pursuits; these are the regions of Hakkiari, the Dersim and the Zeitun. We may therefore expect under such conditions to find warlike agriculturists in the refuges, a tenacious but unwarlike race of farmers and merchants in the plains, and nomads and semi-nomads on the mountain slopes.

Leaving Armenia, we may now turn to examine Mesopotamia, the region of the two rivers, which connects Arabia with Armenia, Persia with Syria, and the Persian Gulf with Anatolia. This broad land of rolling plains—ringed in by mountains on the east and north, by deserts on the west and sea on the south, trisected by two of the great rivers of the world, broken only by insignificant ranges of hills, swampy and tropical as the Hoogly in the southern delta, mild and temperate as Algeria in the north—is rather made by men than a moulder of men's destinies. The starving nomads of Arabia are pushed up to its pastures in summer, the frost-bitten shepherds of Armenia are blown down-

wards by the autumn winds. Such peoples as may pass the forbidding table-land of Persia must find here a happy land of ease and plenty. Its river-banks, bordered by rich soil, invite irrigation and cultivation; the easy footing of the plains, the frequent wells and pools, make communication simple and natural. The great twin rivers are highways from north to south, but their narrowness and the strength of their currents render them impossible for sail or oars from south to north. Here is pasture for innumerable flocks and herds, broad acres for masses of industrious villagers, sites for great cities and wealth sufficient to support an empire. Mesopotamia as a whole is so rich as to invite agriculture, yet is so defenceless and tempting as to prescribe organised government as the only means of guarding the riches it contains. We must expect therefore to find that Mesopotamia (failing colossal disasters) will impose order and civilisation on those who hold it.

# CHAPTER II

## EARLIEST HUMAN INFLUENCES

HAVING outlined the geographical influences affecting the history of the Asiatic provinces, we may now venture to enquire into those human events which have been added age by age to the various instincts, prejudices, and tendencies of the existing inhabitants and to the fresh complexities of the situation. The present writer has naturally no intention of presenting a detailed account of the history of Armenia, Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Arabia, but desires here to refer only to those developments whose results have a direct bearing on the present composition of the region.

Long before the world was overcrowded, people drifted from the unknown into Mesopotamia as they did into Egypt. Swamps, inundations and fertile soil together at once obliged and encouraged industry, and the deep soft earth of South Mesopotamia caused men first to drain in order to obtain a footing, then to irrigate in order to increase the area of cultivation. Industry such as this begets population; population, order and government; the whole, civilisation. So it comes that long before the dawn of known and certain history we have the the foundations of culture, law, and religion firmly and strongly laid along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. Thereafter dynasties might rise and fall, but the thousands of years of uninterrupted prehistoric progress so developed the country that the most savage conquerors were invariably tamed by their own conquests.

For the present the origins of Babylonian and Assyrian civilisation are buried in the mounds of North and South Mesopotamia; but legend, tradition, and the actual facts of later history show

beyond all doubt that here for thousands of years men dug canals, cultivated fields, made laws, bought, sold, and travelled from place to place. Accordingly in the first faint dawn of known things we descry between Mosul and the Persian Gulf a teeming and prosperous world of incredible wealth, a world the constant scene of the contention of two forces—the struggle for the supremacy, between the adventurers driven up from the south by sun and drought, and the adventurers of the eastern mountains of Persia pressing down from the bare uplands into the luscious and cultivated plains.

Yet whether Babylonia and Assyria were united or divided, or ruled by a Semitic conqueror from the south, or an Elamite conqueror from the north-east, civilisation, learning, culture, progress, and wealth-production continued unbroken and uninterrupted ; the old canals—so old that the Gods were reputed to have created them—were kept in repair, and every hundred years saw new canals built and newer and richer fields brought under crops. Indeed the remarkable fact of Babylonian and Assyrian history is that there is no break in it ; whether we read a conjectural interpretation of a broken brick tablet pricked out before Abraham was born, or the definite and explicit accounts of Tabari, the historian of the Caliphs, who died a hundred years after Charlemagne, we see links in one continuous chain of human existence, highly developed, luxurious, and intense. From the day of the flint to the day of the Crusader's sword this land of dykes and crops was one of the centres and storehouses of the world's civilisation.

Having gained a secure footing in the delta of the Tigris and Euphrates, civilisation diffused northwards along the two rivers and eventually influenced all men dwelling within direct communication of them. This would then give us the following probability or possible hypothesis as to the sequence of events. A riparian civilisation was born in the delta. Semites and Elamites alternately controlled it ; but no matter who was master, the bases of culture and wealth-production remained unimpaired and the development was unchecked. The arts, crafts, and learning evolved in the delta were adopted in less and varying degrees by the nomads of Arabia, the people of Elam and such men as dwelt within the peninsula of Asia Minor—not perhaps

wholly by means of war and conquest, nor yet wholly by means of trade ; but by means of a combination of both, linked together through the annual migrations of the northern shepherds, who must have, as now, brought news or goods or war with each recurring season.

From this it would seem, firstly, that the Semites and Elamites, who alternately governed Assyria or Babylonia or both, did not destroy the canal system because its tax-producing merits had become familiar to them long before they held it in their power. Secondly, it would explain why monuments, for convenience called Hittite, which in style are obviously allied to that of Babylonia, should be found in the interior of Asia Minor and not on the coast ; for all communication with Babylonia would be along the interior valleys. Another influence of civilisation which may not be disregarded is that of Egypt. Without venturing on any debatable ground it is pretty safe to say that by means of war and commerce Egyptian culture would, in the natural course of events, permeate northwards through Palestine and Syria, meeting the ripples of Babylonian culture somewhere in the neighbourhood of Damascus.

So much for the inland regions. Along the coasts we must be bound by our geographical survey to anticipate the predominance of a civilisation from over-sea the moment that men over-sea were sufficiently advanced to build ships. Assuming that material development was sufficiently advanced to transport Egyptian arts and methods so far as Crete, it would not be too much to expect that such influences would extend into the country around the Dardanelles, Smyrna, the plain of Adana, and to such points as permitted of a permanent foothold on the Mediterranean coast.

Our conception of the prehistoric condition of the map which is now known as that of Asiatic Turkey would therefore be something as follows—two centres of human prosperity, the one in Egypt, the other in Babylonia, both radiating civilisation along the lines of least resistance ; Babylonia, through the passes into Elam or Persia, up the Tigris gorges to the lake of Van, up the Euphrates valley to North Syria, through the Cilician g
into the parallel valleys of Asia Minor and Anatolia ; Egypt,

past the Dead Sea into Palestine, and across the water to Crete and the Troad and Lydia. Granted that the world was then but little crowded and that great displacements of peoples had not yet become a frequent factor of history, it is easy to conceive that in the course of a thousand years there would be but few parts of the map where civilisation of some kind had not taken root. It is easy also to believe that the general disposition of this world would take the form of a large coalition or empire in Assyria and Babylonia, another in Egypt, while the interior of the peninsula of Asia Minor and Syria would be broken up into small valley communities each reflecting something of the civilisation of the nearest of the two great neighbours, and the littoral regions would be the landing-places of colonists from over-sea, or the starting-point of inland peoples who, having reached the coast, learned how to build a ship.

One other point which we must take into consideration is that in the dim distance of the continents of Europe and Asia there were races, peoples, and tribes of savages, wholly untinctured by civilisation of any kind, mere hordes of wandering savages barely emerging from the age of stone, blindly pushing here and there without design or purpose. These hung on east and west, a double menace to the young life which was growing so slowly but so surely in the valleys of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Happily enough for us, the heirs of this early progress, the Sahara, the Persian deserts and the sea, guarded the life-centres of Babylonia and the Nile Delta from the swarming onslaught of sheer barbarians. There were only two roads by which whole nations could move toward the Persian Gulf or the Mediterranean, either through Thrace and so across the Bosphorus to the Cilician gates, or else from the Caucasus and down the Tigris gorges. The adoption of either of these routes meant a long period of war and strife with partially-cultured peoples before the actual fountain of civilisation could be reached. And if a barbarous people conquer a civilised people slowly, they themselves become insensibly civilised in the process.


(I) PRE-PERSIAN circa 600 B.C.
Lydia
Media
Babylonia
Independent States
Free Greek Cities underlined
English Miles
(II) PERSIAN circa 500 B.C.
Persia
Independent States
(III) POST-PERSIAN circa 188 B.C.
Pergamum
Seleucid Empire
Free Greek States
Gauls
Ptolemy
Independent States
(IV) ROME v. PARTHIA circa 50 B.C.
Rome
Protected State
Parthia
Kingdom of Armenia
Independent City States underlined thus:-
(V) ROME v. PERSIA (SASSANIAN) circa 300 A.D.
Rome
Persia
Kingdom of Armenia
(VI) THE OMAYYAD CALIPHATE v. BYZANTINE EMPIRE 748 A.D.
Kingdom of Mohammed 632
Additions under first 3 Caliphs 632-56
Additions under Omayyad Caliphs 661-748
Boundary at death of Walid
Byzantine
Emery Walker Ltd. sc.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ASIATIC EMPIRES

HAVING outlined the geographical and human factors affecting the regions covered by modern Turkey-in-Asia, we may now make a general survey of those movements, developments, changes, and reactions of which it has been the theatre. Though a great deal is known of the isolated details of ancient history, and though much has been deciphered regarding the rise and fall of the first civilised states which existed in Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, and the Anatolian peninsula, it is hardly possible to obtain a clear view of the general situation until a period which to the modern antiquary seems but yesterday—that is to say, until Cyrus was proclaimed King of Kings in Babylon in 538 B.C.

At that date the mists of time roll back and disclose to view a world no longer young, a condition of affairs the outcome of perhaps 4,000 years of strife and culture. After a long series of alternations between Semite and Elamite, the Persians had finally conquered Babylonia and Assyria. A virile race of warriors, lawgivers, and administrators, with a strong military organisation, suddenly possessed of the wealth centre of existing civilisation, they naturally became the most formidable power that had yet appeared.

The world which the Persians found awaiting their dominion was already broken and shaken by internecine strife, by previous conquest, or by barbarian incursions. Babylonian, Assyrian, Median, Jewish, Phrygian, and Lydian kingdoms and principalities had been at each others' throats for centuries, while the Greeks, who had arisen from the ruins of the Aegean civilisation,

had dotted the coasts and eastern islands of the Mediterranean with small independent colonies incapable of strong combined action, and ever hostile to the Phoenician seamen and merchants, who traded as far west as Spain and had already laid the foundations of the future Carthaginian Empire.

Moreover, the northern parts of the peninsula of Asia Minor had been overrun by hordes of Cimmerians, Scythians, Bithynians, and other savages who came into Anatolia from Europe, or into Armenia from the Caucasus. Consequently all the component parts of the western world within the ken of the Persians fell into one of three categories—small weak kingdoms like Phoenicia, at constant feud with their neighbours; civilised peoples sinking under the pressure of invading hordes; or nations, once great, but now torn by dissensions and accustomed to defeat.

When capacity and wealth suddenly centralised in the Persians, there seemed for a moment a prospect of the establishment of a true world-empire embracing all civilised men within its fold. The Persians accepted all worships, respected all customs, accommodated themselves to the various schemes of government that had grown up in the course of time. The desert patriarch, the national assembly, the feudal council, the priest princes, the municipal republic, or the despot kings were none of them strange to the Persian rulers. Each form of maintaining order was accepted and confirmed; each kingdom, nation, republic, theocracy, or tribe was allowed to follow its own bent in the management of its own affairs, so long as it acknowledged Persian supremacy, paid its tithes, and supplied its quota of troops. The only cohesive and visible elements of the Persian Empire consisted in the planting of Persian colonies in every unit, the setting up in every province of a Persian governor-general who was supreme military commander, and the establishment of an accurate and complex system of posts for the purpose of the transmission of news.

The advent of an empire so grand in the simplicity of its conception would naturally be received without much demur by a world fearful of barbarian invasion and wearied by wars. The endurance of such an empire was only limited by the vitality of the central organisation; and so long as the Persian

race was sound, and the Persian dynasty capable of producing able and healthy kings, so long was this great world-state an impregnable fortress against barbarian incursions and a guarantee of peaceful progress within its borders.

Nevertheless, in the strength of the Persian Government lay its weakness. It was tolerated because it performed certain functions, but it inspired no enthusiasm; it was powerful only because a small number of persons, controlled by a benevolent despot, obeyed orders which were based upon a proper understanding of human nature and sound appreciation of the requirements of the hour. For the Persian Empire to transform itself from an all-powerful human organisation into a defenceless huddle of masterless slaves required no change in its system, merely an alteration of character in the very few who controlled it.

In 500 B.C. the Persian Empire dominated the world by reason of its toleration, moderation, honesty, and efficiency. Two centuries had not elapsed before its kings had become the playthings of women and eunuchs; its satraps, disloyal, incompetent, and rapacious officials; its marvellous system of posts and communications, mere channels of spies' reports and intrigues; its armies, hordes of untrained, undisciplined polyglot slaves and blackguards; its provinces, kingdoms enjoying almost openly an unacknowledged independence. The lack of enterprise of the peoples which the empire contained, the vast wealth of Mesopotamia, the immense prestige that it had acquired in the past, served to save the empire from internal collapse; but the longer disaster was delayed, the more overwhelming was it when it finally came. The Persians had set themselves over the world by force above; the Greeks were conquering from below. The Greeks, who had received civilisation from Egypt by sea and from Babylonia by land, had so developed arts, science, and knowledge that when they fell under Persian dominion they were superior in all things to the Orientals who had originally instructed them, and to those who now by mere weight ruled over them.

Once Persia reduced the Asiatic states to a semblance of unity, Greek influence was able to make itself felt in every city or centre of culture. The merchant, the architect, the painter, the

philosopher, or the travelling trader—each helped to diffuse the language and the unproved civilisation of these western people. The governing power of the Persians declined, the diffusion of Greek influence rapidly increased. It only wanted the Persians to begin to employ Greek generals and Greek soldiers, to show that the rulers were as inferior to the Greeks in the realms of war as in the arts of peace.

Thus it came about that, long before Alexander was born, the roads for his conquering armies were being prepared by the general trend of events. The Persian governors became insubordinate; the autonomous local governments, less tractable; the Persian colonists faded by intermarriage into the indigenous populations among whom they were planted; the Persian court and government, choked with riches, pleasure, and power, lost its virility and capacity. On the other hand, the Greeks invaded every province of urban life, spread their language and fashions throughout the richest portions of the empire, and at last began to be employed as troops as well.

It fell out that ten thousand Greek soldiers were carried in the train of a rebellious governor who desired to make himself king. They marched from Anatolia down to the distant plains of Mesopotamia. There their Persian patron was slain and their officers made prisoners; yet the ten thousand marched back from what is now Baghdad through Armenia up to the forests of Pontus and so to the Black Sea, and, save for the shrill-voiced hillmen of the Karduchai, no one said them nay. When the news spread from town to town that so small a number of Greeks could go where they liked from one end of the empire to the other, it was not long before men began to realise that if ten thousand Greeks could do this without leaders, there was very little that a larger number could not do with a leader.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE MACEDONIAN TRANSFORMATION

FROM the death of Cyrus the Satrap to the advance of Alexander, the chronicle of wars, plots, revolutions, and intrigues need not detain us, save to note that with the weakening of the Persian rule the freedom of intellectual development on the Greek coasts and in the vicinity of the Greek cities grew, and tended more and more to absorb such primitive elements as remained in those parts and to enlarge the area of Greek influence on culture, manners, and tradition.

The utter collapse of the Persian rule, and the rapid absorption of the whole of its territory into the Macedonian Empire, was not surprising when one realises that it was not so much the fall of an empire as an exchange of rulers. To put it briefly, we know that a king and a court army were ruling an enormous tract of country by means of provincial governors and military police. Alexander broke to pieces the first force the Persian king placed before him, the local governors surrendered and their provinces became his; as he proceeded southwards, cities and districts transferred their allegiance with great readiness, except in a few instances. What indeed was to induce them to do otherwise? A rich town like Damascus, doubtless a great centre of wealth and trade, beheld its hereditary rulers in retreat and heard of their defeat; its garrison was probably composed of local levies officered by men appointed by the Persians; its inhabitants, Damascenes. What interest could these men have in opposing an armed resistance to a powerful enemy, who on the mere word of surrender became their patron and ruler? Darius and his court were beyond the Tigris, Alexander and his

victorious troops within a few days' march of the city. The alternatives of fidelity to a distant stranger, which entailed loss of wealth and men, with a possibility of slavery or death, and the alluring prospect of surrender to the new-comer and safety, were questions which would not take the notables and elders of a wealthy city long to decide; and such must have been the position of the bulk of the towns of importance between the Bosphorus and the Euphrates after Alexander's great victory at Issus.

What applies to the surrounding towns after the battle of Issus may be said to be equally true of the remainder of the lands with which we are concerned after the battle of Arbela, for then the actual Persian organisation had been ended by the destruction of its last army and the piteous death of its king, in whom it had its life and being. The whole of the Asian dominion of Persia fell into the hands of Alexander. Roughly speaking, he retained the provincial organisation of his predecessor; but, on the other hand, he introduced the Greek language into the armies, and Greek culture into the houses of the governors and merchants.

These improvements were doubtless a revelation to the already wealthy and cultivated inhabitants of Mesopotamia, middle Asia Minor, and northern Syria. There were no religious or patriotic prejudices existent to hinder a man wishing to draw correctly, to build graceful mansions and temples, to speak a commodious language, and so enjoy the advantages of an enlarged commerce and the pleasing attractions of the theatre. The Persians had brought with them nothing but armies and governors; Alexander carried in his train art and civilisation, and in the rear of his advance came Greek settlers, merchants, and philosophers, each ready to dispose of his wares to the highest bidder. Even though Alexander died and his system came to nothing, yet those who inherited the fragments of his empire, the Seleucids, the Ptolemies, the kings of Pergamum, being ever under Greek influence, maintained its civilisation, in outward form if not in spirit. They founded great Greek cities at intervals from Alexandria to the Taurus, and from the Taurus to Ctesiphon; while the native Greeks carried on the line of culture from Cilicia along the Mediterranean coast to the Hellespont. Along this

belt of land armies were continually marching to and fro, peace was never of a long duration, and small peoples like the Jews maintained a racial feeling. Yet the general tendency was to make men more similar in speech and custom, more communicative, and to bring about a general fusion of the Greek, Babylonian, and Semitic peoples.

This fusion was not indeed strictly anthropological, but was rather a tendency to become similar owing to a like environment. It left the village peasant pretty much as he was before: perhaps Antioch had no more effect on the surrounding agriculturists than has the Greek city of Alexandria on the brown fellaheen who live in the mud hamlets on the outskirts of the city to-day; though doubtless the richer merchants and local gentry affected the manners of the dwellers in the cities. It may be assumed, however, that although Greek manners and civilisation gradually died out beyond the present western frontier of Persia, they held so strongly to the cities of Mesopotamia and Babylonia that, when the Parthian invasions brought them under the rule of a second Eastern Empire, their arts and customs did not change to any appreciable extent.

To the north the kingdoms of Armenia, Paphlagonia and Pontus, never really touched by either the Persian or the Macedonian conquerors, seem to have remained as before, and on the death of Alexander publicly assumed an independence they had always held. Except in name their civilisation must have been partly Persian and partly their own, with additions from the Greek.

In the extreme east we have now to record the strange incursion of the Gauls. A detachment of some twenty thousand of the army of Brennus, which had been driven back at Delphi, burst into Asia and passed through Bithynia, ravaging as they went, until they came to the banks of the Halys (the Kizil Irmak), a little north of Angora. There they settled down amidst the dark forests and deep gorges of eastern Paphlagonia, and converted the empty district into a kind of mountain retreat. With some intelligence they divided the whole of the area south of them into three districts, for the purposes of blackmail and tribute, which they exacted from the princes and rulers of those lands without interfering with the government; and except when

they hired themselves out as mercenaries to the Seleucids, Ptolemies and kings of Pergamum, they rarely emerged from their pastures except in foraging parties or to insist on the prompt payment of the tribute which they demanded. It is not improbable, however, that they sometimes intermarried with the surrounding peoples, and often carried off unwilling brides on their predatory expeditions, though they maintained their language and martial customs.

Considering the weakness of the Phrygians, who had been subject in turn to the Lydians, the Persians, the Macedonians, and after the death of Alexander to the various successful pretenders to power, it is not a matter for wonder that the Gauls should strike terror into this feeble and oppressed race with their ferocious courage and heavy armament. The kings and cities on the coasts had apparently little stomach to fight a race of barbarous savages who cared neither whether they lived or died, once the frenzy of successful battle held them in its grip; though it is true that Attalus of Pergamum gave them a shrewd lesson on one expedition when their exactions had grown more burdensome than even the Asiatic Greeks could bear with patience. However, to us the most interesting fact is that a distinct nationality came into the country and established itself as such on the banks of the Halys a little north-east of Angora, where, as the climate was favourable and the soil rich, it is probable that its numbers increased rapidly.

The results of Alexander's conquests and the subsequent dissolution of his empire produced a situation entirely dominated by the geographical dispositions of the area we have under consideration. The Mediterranean littoral, with its fertile mountain sides, inlets, ships and harbours, and the broad plain of northern Mesopotamia, with its corn-fields and the rich irrigated lands of the deltas of the Tigris and Euphrates, supported a vast but disunited civilisation where art and commerce was one, but where imperial government had subsided into a series of warring kingdoms, cities, and principalities. Armenia and Pontus were independent native states, and the central plateau of Anatolia a kind of "no man's land," which neither the luxurious states of the south nor the rough kingdoms of the north-east had any serious impulse to conquer and annex.

This world of savage mountaineers and luxurious peoples of coasts and plains could produce nothing great in the way of empires from within itself. The name of Alexander had gone; the cosmopolitan Greek civilisation had no real imperial theory to work upon; the Persian dynasty was not only destroyed, but its fundamental ideas were shattered and discredited. The three possible powers of dominion lay without the area—ordered government must come from Rome, or tyranny from the East, or a barbarian avalanche from the Caucasus.

Why civilised dominion should come from east and west and that northern barbarian incursion should be long delayed, is easily to be understood, because whoever invaded Southern Mesopotamia from the east had to pass through the immense civilised area occupied by modern Persia, picking up on the way the methods and arts of government and culture; whoever came from the west had to be sufficiently civilised to command the sea; whoever came from the north had to reckon with the warlike Armenian and Pontine states before the richer countries were reached. That overwhelming hordes of barbarians did not follow in the wake of the Gauls into Anatolia is readily comprehensible, since most migrations of barbarians go from east to west and never turn back until some obstacle or congestion sets the tide flowing in more devious channels.

The condition of our map just before the advent of the Romans from the west and the Parthians from the east shows us a civilisation from which all the original masters have vanished, but in which the ancient factors of wealth and progress still remain untouched. The Hittites, Phrygians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Phoenicians, Jews, and Egyptians have lost their power, and in their place nominally stand Gauls, Greeks, Seleucids, and Ptolemies; but the Gauls are but Gallo-Greek, as the Consul Manlius contemptuously called them, the Greeks are Asiatic-Greeks, the Seleucids are by habit and intermarriage but Orientals, the Ptolemies in every external Egyptians. The canals, roads, and ships remained, the wealth remained; the population remained. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

## CHAPTER V

### ROMANS AND PARTHIANS

THE Romans and Parthians met on the Euphrates in 54 B.C. The advance of both invaders had been equally delayed, the Romans by the civil disturbances in the west, the Parthians by Scythian wars in the far north-east. The Romans had absorbed the Anatolian peninsula, Syria, and Egypt, the Parthians North and South Mesopotamia and Armenia. It was as natural that on the one hand the Gauls from the west should become Roman vassals, as that on the other the oriental Armenian and Pontine states should recognise in the Parthians the successors of the great kings.

Of Rome and her methods sufficient is known to make special notice superfluous; but it is otherwise with regard to the Parthians, and it is only right that some attention should be paid to them. The Parthians were another manifestation of that constantly recurring factor in eastern history, the "shepherd kings." Hyksos, Parthians, Palmyrenes, Arabs, Berbers, Mongols, Turks, and Manchus, are each a variation of the same theme—a nomadic race of shepherds descends upon a weakened civilisation, seizes the reins of power, absorbs culture and adopts luxurious habits, retains its pristine vigour for a time and then becomes wholly effete. The last "shepherd kings" were the American millionaires of the West.

The Parthian Kingdom had been formed by a band of intelligent nomad horsemen, who took advantage of the various dissensions among the Greek and Macedonian princes in Persia and seized the government of the kingdom of Parthia, the inhabitants of which now became their serfs and men-at-arms,

while the invading nomads held the position of a rigid aristocracy. In countries whose peoples have long been subject to a foreign rule, such a system as this is often by no means unsuccessful, for the tyranny of an aristocracy presents to the labouring peasant a far less injurious rule than that of a rapacious government official. The latter is only anxious to extract money and glory from those whom he must leave shortly either through promotion or disgrace, and from the days of Xerxes to those of Warren Hastings has ever been detested and loathed by those under his charge; whereas the tribal chief who with a few companions seizes the government of a district and makes it his home, must, in the interest of himself and his successors, rule those over whom he has made himself master in a manner less unjust and, after a fashion, more paternal. It is to his advantage to foster loyalty and to encourage independence to a certain degree; his men-at-arms, if they are to stand by him to any purpose in battle, must not be craven slaves driven forward with the whip; his lands, if they are to profit him, must be cultivated by well-fed peasants who are not tax-wrung to the last turn. Consequently such a ruler—where he is not assisted by a government organisation, as in Ireland in the 'eighties or in France in the 18th century, to exact more than is economically practicable—will present a sympathetic rule to a people accustomed to the exactions and tyrannies of hungry office-holders and tax-gatherers.

The Parthians, like all nomadic conquerors, assimilated their civil customs and culture to those which they found in the land they seized, as they were obviously superior to their own; but they retained that military organisation and system which was the means of helping them to affluence. It was because the Parthian kingdom was founded on this more solid basis of discipline and mutual support of lord and serf that it was so much more durable, and could bear much heavier blows and buffets than could its Persian predecessor.

During the period which intervened between the death of Alexander and the meeting of the Parthian and Roman Empires, wars and changes of Imperial rule were so frequent and so ephemeral that we must imagine that the bulk of the people paid but little heed to them, beyond making with the conqueror

such arrangements as they could. The wars were nearly all of a kind which affected the official collectors of the taxes only, and not the taxpayer; and when amidst these broils the inhabitants themselves arose in arms against the ruler, it was a matter for note on the part of the ancient historians—as when, for example, the people of Seleucia on the Persian Gulf arose and murdered the Parthian Satrap in about 130 B.C.

We must remember, however, that owing to the greatness of the extent of the various empires and their artificial nature, the civilisation and direct government of the people, whether they were ruled by petty kings or not, must have been to a large extent municipal; and that each city was surrounded by a number of villages which it administered, and on whose products it depended for supplies and for the basis of its commerce. And as the actual governments depended on wringing from the cities the treasure with which to purchase soldiers from the hardy mountain tribes, it was therefore not to their interest to wreck or destroy the towns—unless indeed one produced a pretender to power, in which case dire vengeance and probably total destruction awaited it.

In this way the direction of military administration and imperial finance became entirely divorced in men's minds from practical government; and notwithstanding the vilest tyranny of sots, drunkards, tyrants, lunatics, savages, and abandoned women, who from time to time held the reins of government, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and Syria contained enormous populations, huge canals and dykes were kept in repair, and commerce and architecture flourished, in spite of a perpetual procession of hostile armies and a continual changing of the nationality of the governor. Each peasant's interest was centred in his ruling town; each citizen's interest was in the progress and prosperity of his city; and the advent of an enemy's army may have sometimes been looked on even with satisfaction, if his victory was assured and the payment of his contracts a matter of certainty.

A raid from the north, on the other hand, must have been a matter for dread. Then the villagers had need to take refuge behind the walls of the cities, from whence they could descry the smoke which told of the wreck and damage caused by the nomads. So long, however, as the canals were not destroyed

(and indeed they were built with such solidity and caution that their safety was assured), no irreparable damage could be effected; the wealth of the land was secure and its ultimate prosperity undoubted, and what under other circumstances would have been an unparalleled disaster was only a passing inconvenience.

In Armenia and Pontus the condition of life was quite otherwise. These were mountain districts containing fierce tribes headed by powerful native nobility under recognised ruling kings, while in the valleys and plains the peaceful cultivator provided the necessary economic resources. The people had never known a strong foreign domination, had never been conquered. Punitive expeditions, it is true, had extorted from them admissions of conquest and tribute; but they had never been subject to a strange governor supported by a loyal army of barbarians. Whether their kings were descended from nominal satraps or not matters but little; it suffices to say that they were representative of their peoples and ruled through the power and loyalty of their nobles. In fact, the kingdoms of Armenia and Pontus were the only two states which may be said to have borne any resemblance to our idea of a nation; and although they may perhaps have been less democratic than the townships of Syria and western Asia Minor, they were undoubtedly more united and homogeneous than any of the other states or principalities in the tract of country under discussion.

The inhabitants must have have much in common with those of the present day. The Laz, the Kurd, and the Armenian must have formed a good percentage of their population; and it is possible that the two former peoples, who dwelt on the highlands and moved to and fro with their flocks, provided the kings with troops, while the last named were the skilled farmers and artificers for whom those countries were even then famous. The governing classes of Persian, Parthian and Macedonian origin in the male line were of course of no race in particular, having intermarried with the daughters of foreign princes and local notables since their arrival. Such civilisation as there was centred round the towns and highways, while the shepherd tribes and cultivators were probably ruled by their hereditary chiefs and nobles in the villages and camps on the mountain-side. Cilicia

and Cappadocia were now thoroughly subject to Greek influence and contained numerous wealthy and highly civilised towns, besides possessing a considerable merchant marine. Passing from Cilicia to the Hellespont, the whole Mediterranean coast was crowded with wealthy cities and Greek colonies, entirely cosmopolitan in thought and speech, with those municipal and local ambitions which seem natural to the Grecian character. The Grecian zone extended from Caria to the Bosphorus and followed the coast as far as Sinope on the Black Sea, where it gradually faded away.

Syria was broken up into a curious quilt-like pattern of principalities and municipal kingdoms, beginning with the almost barbarous states of Commagene and Edessa (Urfa) in the north. South of these stood Bambyce with its huge temples and priestly governors. Towards the coast a dense population in villages and towns clustered around the independent cities of Antioch, Apamea and Emesa (Homs); while out in the wilderness the great Semitic merchant city of Palmyra was gaining wealth and greatness as the neutral trading ground between Parthia and Rome. Between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon we find, at the height of its glory, Heliopolis (Baalbek), the battered fragments of which even now command our admiration. Out to the east beyond Damascus stood the cities of Auranitis and Trachonitis under the sway of the Nabatean kings—those Bedawi chiefs who came from the deserts and, having carved out for themselves a kingdom, had gradually become wealthy merchants and traders. Bending in towards Galilee we find the wondrous cities of Gerasa and Philadelphia (Amman), connected by solid roads of masonry and furnished with gigantic aqueducts. Proceeding still westward we come to Judaea, at that time under the rule of Herod the Great; while southwards lies Idumaea under the direct rule of Cleopatra and Antony.

Syria is still so rich in ruins and remains of the period that it is not difficult to picture to oneself the nature of its civilisation. The arts of Greece, imported long before, had been developed into magnificence that bordered on vulgarity. The richness of ornamentation, the lavish expense, the flaunting wealth, all tell that the tastes of the voluptuous and artistic Semites were

then as now. I have stood in the colonnades at Palmyra and I have dined in the Hotel Cecil, and save that the latter is built of iron, daubed with sham wood, sham stucco, sham gold, sham velvet, and sham stone, the effect is identical. In Syria there were slaves in sufficient quantity to make real buildings, but the artistic spirit is as debased as anything made by machinery. Over against the cities the village folk must have dwelt pretty much as they do now, in houses of mud and dry stone wall; while out in the distant pastures the Bedawin tended their flocks in freedom under the rule of the Nabatean kings of their own race, or performed the office of guardians and agents of the great trading caravans. Beyond the herdsmen lay the parching deserts which acted as the impenetrable barrier and defence of the Parthian Empire behind the Euphrates, where stood the great cities of Ctesiphon, Seleucia, Hatra, Nisibin, Harran, and hundreds more whose very names are forgotten. These great townships subsisted on the enormous cereal wealth of Mesopotamia, watered as it then was by canals, whose makers' names were even then already lost in the mists of antiquity. Babylon and Nineveh had passed away; the successors of Persia and Macedon had given place to Parthia; but the people and the cultivation were the same as when Cyrus the Conqueror had first subdued the land. The language of many of the towns was Greek, and the cultured citizens of Seleucia might criticise the philosophies and tragedies of Athens; but the millions of the agricultural population knew possibly no more of these things than does many an Essex peasant of to-day know of what passes in the metropolis.

The struggle between the powers of Rome and Parthia occupied no fewer than 280 years, and was in the main fought out between the Syrian coast and the Tigris. It was never on any occasion pressed to a decisive action, nor did it ever reach any definite conclusion. The fate of neither empire depended on the exact definition of the frontier which lay between them—both were equally pressed on their more distant frontiers by barbarian incursions. In fact, we must never forget that while the fighting was taking place in northern Mesopotamia, the Romans were holding the Rhine and the British wall, and the Parthians were engaged on the Oxus and Indus. Moreover, both sides were

equally handicapped. The Roman infantry could not pursue the elusive cavalry of their enemies beyond the Euphrates; the disaster which overtook Crassus on the upper Mesopotamian plains was a salutary lesson which lasted Roman generals until Valerian's time, when the same experiment was made, with the same fatal consequences. The Parthians were never able to continue operations through a winter; firstly, because the rain and moisture made their principal weapon, the bow, useless; and secondly, because a feudal levy of cavalry was unable to carry on operations in the mountainous regions of Cilicia and Syria.

The main strategic factor, without which this constant war might have ended in the final defeat of one side or another, lay in Armenia. Armenia was the third party in all Parthian and Roman campaigns. The permanent conquest and occupation of Armenia was apparently beyond the power of either Rome or the Parthian king; the huge parallel ranges, the difficulty of lateral communications, the untamed nature of the hillmen, all combined to present difficulties with which neither empire had the time to deal. Antony in 38 B.C. and Corbulo in 63 A.D. made attempts to attack Parthia through Armenia. Both campaigns failed in their main objective, though Corbulo's march from Syria to the Caucasus must ever remain one of the greatest of military achievements.

Owing to these considerations the Armenian court was the scene of a constant and sustained intrigue between the ambassadors of the two Empires. The King was either the nominee or friend of one party or the other; and for two centuries the diplomatists of both nations were engaged in fomenting revolutions, bribing, assassinating, or kidnapping the various occupants of the throne. To show how complicated and tedious these politics were, I venture, at the risk of irritating the reader, to give the following brief account of one phase which I took the trouble to unravel and set down some years ago.

Tiberius, who was acting as the agent of Augustus in Asia, set up one Tigranes as king, but not being satisfied with his conduct, had him strangled a few months later. The Romans had placed Artavasdes II. on the throne, who failed to meet

with the approval of his subjects and was soon driven out in spite of Roman assistance, Phraates, King of Parthia, being requested by the Armenians to annex the country. Phraates was unable to accept the offer, fearing the displeasure of Augustus, who despatched the young Caius and his tutor Lollius with a large army to prevent the addition of Armenia to Parthia. On the refusal of Phraates to take Armenia, a noble named Tigranes proclaimed himself king, but was easily deposed by Caius, who once more restored Artavasdes to the throne. Unluckily this monarch died, and Tigranes reappeared, and again became King of Armenia, only to be driven out once more by Caius and Lollius, who set up a Mede named Ariobarzanes in his place. Vonones, a Romanised Arsacid who had been Augustus' nominee to the Parthian throne and had just been deposed by one Artabanus, arrived in Armenia just after Ariobarzanes had been killed, or had died a natural death, and was accepted by the Armenians as king as a kind of compromise with Rome. However, Artabanus of Parthia could not allow the man he had just ousted to occupy so influential a position on his borders, and consequently invaded Armenia and deposed Vonones, who took refuge in Syria, the throne of Armenia being for the time held by Orodes, the son of Artabanus. Tiberius, now Emperor of Rome, was far too great a statesman to allow Armenia to become a province of Parthia, and, although he had many matters of moment in hand both at home and abroad, despatched Germanicus to settle the affairs of the distracted kingdom. Germanicus entered Armenia in 18 A.D., and set up Zeno, the son of the King of Pontus, on the throne.

The military operations were very much on a plane with the diplomacy—Parthian horsemen sometimes made their way as far south as Syria, Roman legions sometimes camped by the Tigris and descended right into Babylonia; but neither side was able to do more.

For two long centuries the forces of eastern and western civilisation stood locked in this feeble grip—each held back by its internal dissensions and external troubles; each Empire equally handicapped by military systems which could not be adapted to its rival's conquest.

During this period of Roman and Parthian warfare the

Roman Empire followed a policy of consolidation, the Parthian that of confederation. The Asiatic kingdoms west of Armenia and the Euphrates were gradually reduced to provinces and districts; native dynasties were exterminated or bought out; independent peoples were either subdued, as the Gauls and people of Pontus were subdued, or else scattered and destroyed as were the Jews. This policy of consolidation began in Commagene, which was annexed in 17 A.D.,[1] and was practically completed in 106 A.D. with the reduction of the Semitic kingdom of the Nabateans.

In Parthia the Arsacid dynasty never seems to have attempted to re-establish the old Persian bureaucracy: vassal kings and feudal lords, and subject cities such as Seleucia and Hatra, were held together by a kind of flimsy tie, the actual substance of which is difficult to estimate or appreciate. The history of Parthia, such as we can get it, is one long series of palace conspiracies, small rebellions, brief excursions to the west, and long wars with Scythians in the north-east. How strange were the vicissitudes of the occupants of the Parthian throne is instanced by the undoubted fact that sometimes the Parthian King was actually a nominee of the Roman Emperor, and that frequently members of the Arsacid house took refuge in the distant camps of the Scythians themselves.

One other event which took place during the Roman-Parthian period is of the very highest importance—namely, the incursion of the Alans from the Caucasus during the third decade of the second century of our era. The actual ethnology of these barbarians is obscure, nor is it of great importance; but the route which they followed is of interest. They passed straight through Armenia and raided Cappadocia. Although the districts in question sustained considerable damage, this invasion was not of a very serious nature, and the moment an army had been gathered together by the Roman governor the Alans withdrew. It is interesting to notice how little resistance Armenia offered to the Alan invaders, although it was a country so impossible to govern that Hadrian had been obliged to reconstitute it a kingdom. If proof were wanting, this fact is sufficient to demonstrate plainly that

[1] Commagene was given independence in 38 and lost it in 78, but is cited as one of the earliest annexations.

the highroads and valleys were as now cultivated by an unwarlike race, whose only defence was flight or submission, while the inaccessible hills were inhabited by turbulent and fierce mountaineers who despised all government, yet would never combine to meet a common enemy until he began to gather taxes. Through such a country invasion and passage were easy, but final subjection almost impossible—unless indeed the mountain tribes were first of all disarmed and reduced in a methodical manner.

During the latter years of the Roman and Parthian war the Parthians decidedly lost ground : the whole of northern Mesopotamia had fallen under the Roman dominion, Seleucia and Ctesiphon had been sacked and abandoned, and Roman troops had penetrated as far as the Caspian. Armenia had also been weakened by the loss of Armenia Minor, which contained practically the whole of its western districts. But though the Romans had advanced, yet they were in no position to hold the new territory with any prospect of permanent success. Luxury, disorganisation, the smallness of the regular army, the constant struggles of various generals for the imperial purple, the increasing pressure of barbarians on the Rhine, all combined to distract her from any sustained Eastern policy.

The struggle between Rome and Parthia was ended not by the victory of either side but by the sudden collapse of the Arsacid dynasty, which finally succumbed to the constructive genius of one of its own vassal kings, Ardashir, the ruler of Persis.

# CHAPTER VI

## ROMANS AND PERSIANS

THE first years of the reign of Ardashir, King of Persis, were devoted by him to the reconstruction of his own kingdom, and to annexing those of his eastern neighbours, who had long since abandoned all pretence of allegiance to the Parthians. He gradually absorbed all the kingdoms to the east of Persis into his own ; and with the assistance of the Zoroastrian priesthood he welded his provinces together, the religion which had always maintained a great hold over Iran being now used for political ends. Reverence for the Arsacid family had buoyed up the Parthian Empire through many a storm. Ardashir called in the assistance of organised religion to bind his peoples together. The Arsacids had relied on the magic of their name, and the traditions attached to it, to retain the loyalty of their subjects ; those traditions were growing dim, the Parthian power had been steadily declining for a century, the great binding forces of religion had been neglected by them, and now they were appropriated by a rival.

With all the genius of a statesman and a general Ardashir consolidated his first conquests before he attempted to make others, and it was not until 224 A.D. that he ventured to challenge the great Artabanus, his Parthian overlord. Then indeed he was in a position to do so. On the firm and ordered basis of a State religion, with the help of priests, nobles and soldiers, he had built up the fabric of a solid monarchy, which commanded men's respect by its unity, their loyalty by its orthodoxy, and their support by its success. While the Parthian Empire, which had neither cohesion nor unity, was composed of a dwindling

collection of jealous states, whose allegiance to Artabanus now only depended on their own pleasure.

On the plains of Media the last of the Persian Arsacids fell in battle, and Irak and Mesopotamia came under the rule of the seventh great monarchy of the East, the Sassanian. But here again, though, it was only a change of rule; yet it was indeed a change striking more deeply at the manners and customs and beliefs of the people than that of the Achaemenians, Macedonians, or Parthians. For although Ardashir perhaps took over bodily the organisation of the Parthians, made much of their nobles, and married his daughters to their vassal princes, he and his successors worked steadily for one object—the unification of the Empire by compulsory establishment of a dogmatic form of the Zoroastrian religion. Southern Mesopotamia and Irak had been subject to such a lengthy series of invasions, revolutions, and feuds that they were, so to speak, prepared by chance for a new order of things: all the machinery for promoting prosperity was to hand, the great canals were undamaged, the people's genius for controlling great waters remained; all that was required to restore its ancient prosperity was a measure of peace accompanied by stable government.

During the turbulent years which preceded the final downfall of the Parthian Empire, the desert Arabs had been encroaching and settling on the southern tracts of the Mesopotamian peninsula, and had established a completely independent Arab kingdom at Hira, besides invading the central grass plains of Mesopotamia where they were subject to the king of Hatra. In the grass lands they remained pastoral nomads; but in the southern region they became stationary cultivators of the soil, absorbing the original population, acquiring their culture, and giving in exchange their language to the land they had adopted. After Ardashir had conquered Southern Mesopotamia and Media, he made an attempt on Hatra; but where Severus and Trajan had failed he did not succeed and was obliged, like the two other conquerors, to retire. His next move was to attack Armenia, where an Arsacid was still a king; but here he was unsuccessful. The frontier tribes were loyal to the old family they had known so long, and the rough mountain district militated against the use of the Persians' overwhelming masses

of cavalry; for, not yet daring to challenge the Roman power directly, Ardashir was obliged to advance from the south-east, through the almost impenetrable mountains of Corduene (Hakkiari).

Consequently in 230 A.D. the eastern frontier of the Empire of the Sassanians was hardly politically sound, either from the military or civil point of view. On the Persian Gulf the influence of Ardashir was strong, in southern Mesopotamia he had good friends and trustworthy allies in the Princes of Hira; but on the north the town of Hatra, with its dependent Arabian nomads, formed a source of considerable danger, as it might at any time make common cause with the desert tribes of Arabia, who were ever threatening the south-western frontiers, and so nip the rich Babylonian lands between them.

Neither of these two enemies could Ardashir crush or definitely defeat. The walls of Hatra were proof against a rapid siege, and its faithful Bedawin could be relied on to interrupt a prolonged one; the desert-men of Arabia were always able to evade disaster by taking refuge in a southerly retreat that could neither be harassed nor followed up. In the north the Arsacid king of Armenia was a potential disturber of the internal peace of the new Empire; and as Hatra and Armenia were separated by the Roman provinces of Mesopotamia, they might by an able governor be enticed into an alliance against Ardashir.

What further difficulties confronted the new King of Kings in the East we know not, but his embarrassments in the west are pretty plain. A glance at the sketch map will show that an alliance between any two of his Mesopotamian neighbours would at once become a formidable alliance; Hatra and the desert Arabs could threaten the whole of the country between Ctesiphon and the Gulf, and the Romans and Armenians might without difficulty strike at Media and Atropatene simultaneously. In either event Ardashir was threatened on two sides at once, and in both cases the geographical features were in favour of his antagonists, the northern mountains of Armenia being, as we have seen, unfavourable to his cavalry, the surrounding deserts of Hatra secure defences against a steady campaign, and the burning vastness of Arabia a safe retreat for the plundering Arabs.

The most vulnerable point in his enemies' lines were the Roman provinces. If they could be occupied and their strong cities held by Persian troops, Hatra and Armenia could both be kept in check and the desert Arabs in the south be dealt with alone. Further, Mesopotamia was an open country, well-watered and provisioned, well adapted for the Persian horse, who could not only derive every advantage from their mobility, but also live on the country without difficulty.

When Ardashir decided to re-conquer Mesopotamia for the East, the Roman Empire was far gone on the road to its decline. Commodus, Caracalla and Elagabalus had each in turn done something new to disgrace the Imperial purple or sap the foundations of the Empire. Gaul was persistently raided and threatened; central control was becoming weaker, officials more and more corrupt; while the army had grown into a kind of disorderly assemblage of seditious trade-unions, with neither confidence in its leaders nor cohesion in its ranks. In the East things were no better. Cilicia and Isauria were relapsing into barbarism; in Syria the army was mutinous; and on the northern Mesopotamian frontier crowds of deserters fled from Roman discipline, such as it was, to find refuge in Persia.

The Persians advanced into northern Mesopotamia demanding the Euphrates as the frontier between the two Empires. Harassed as the Romans were both within and without, they met their new enemy boldly. Following the strategy of Trajan, Alexander, the Roman Emperor, divided his forces into three armies, one to strengthen and co-operate with the Armenian allies and so overrun Media, a second to proceed southwards to harass Babylonia, while a third under Alexander himself marched across northern Mesopotamia to the Tigris. The results of this campaign are not very minutely related in history. What probably occurred was that the Armenian force succeeded at first, but was caught in the winter snows; that the Babylonian expedition came to grief through sickness; and that the central army gained some small successes near the Tigris. At any rate, the Romans retired where they had acted the part of aggressors, and held their ground where the Persians had attempted to invade (234 A.D.). The campaign ended without any distinct issue; Alexander returned home to be welcomed by the Senate

as a conquering hero, and apparently abandoned for a time his ambitions in regard to the Roman provinces beyond the Euphrates.

The Roman success however was but short-lived, and in 241 A.D. northern Mesopotamia was lost and remained in Persian hands for close on thirty years. During that period the Anatolian peninsula was subject to a new and unexpected terror. A portion of the Goths had established themselves in the Crimea. Hitherto Anatolia had known of eastern conquerors from the south, barbarian raids from the east and west; now she was to experience attack from the north. No sooner did the Goths reach the Black Sea than they built ships and embarked for an unknown destination. This fleet of pirates, after having destroyed Trebizond, swooped upon the coasts of Asia Minor, landing here and there, carrying off immense quantities of plunder, ranging the ungarrisoned country just as had the Gauls five centuries before, save that the Goths did not stay, but sailed off in their ships to enjoy their booty in the Crimea.

At last Valerian, who had by dint of hard fighting secured the Empire in the West, decided to set out for Asia, there to relieve the distresses of those who were suffering from the ravages of the Goths and, if possible, to regain the provinces lost to the Persians. At first all went well. The Goths were driven away to sea, and from Asia Minor Valerian proceeded to Antioch.

Meanwhile Shapur was advancing from the Tigris with the Persian forces. On his way he delayed to besiege Edessa, which the presence of a colony of Caracalla's time had perhaps rendered loyal to Rome throughout the stormy years that had passed. Edessa was hard pressed and sent for relief. Valerian crossed the Euphrates to succour the town, and forgetful of the fate of Crassus and Paetus, allowed himself to be seduced into a battle on the undulating plains. The histories tell us nothing of this battle, but there is the old cry of treachery, which may or may not be justified. What seems to me possible, from a knowledge of the ground, is that the Roman army of heavily-equipped infantry was caught on the march at a distance from water by swarms of Persian cavalry, who could harass the footmen with arrows without exposing themselves to the danger of a charge; that the Roman army was delayed and fatigued during a long

day's desultory fighting; that Valerian was obliged to encamp for the night without reaching his objective; that morning found his forces surrounded by enormous numbers which a charge was unable to disperse; and that famine, thirst, and despair drove the troops to oblige Valerian to surrender.

There was an interview between Shapur and the Emperor, which ended in the submission of the latter to the King of Kings. Valerian, Emperor of Rome, was taken prisoner where the incompetent Crassus had preferred death; and henceforward the aged captive was obliged to act as footboy and butt for the wits of the Persian court, or perhaps he was allowed to dwell in some gilded cage in distant Iran, like Demetrius, the Seleucid hostage of Parthia.

The capture of Valerian was a desperate blow for the Roman Empire, already utterly unnerved by the epoch of disaster through which it was passing. To all four quarters of the world spread the dreadful news of defeat and disgrace; ere the messengers of woe reached Antioch the Persians had forestalled them and were busy sacking and destroying the town. Northern Syria was overrun and Rome, the protector, could give no assistance. Shapur, flushed with victory, turned northwards and swept on to Tarsus; neither the passes of Mount Amanus nor the Cilician gates were defended; the cities of the plain were gutted and destroyed; the victorious easterns poured into Cappadocia and seized Caesarea; and for a time it looked as if the provinces of Roman Asia were to become part of the Persian Empire once more.

We have now to consider a brief but most important episode. Since the establishment of the first Persian Empire, the Semitic peoples had never attained any degree of place or power. Though they formed a great proportion of the population of Syria and Mesopotamia, though they had resisted both Roman and Persian with tenacity, yet there had never been a moment when they had shown any real recuperative power, or gained any temporary success. The last western Semitic principality of the Nabateans had been suppressed by Trajan; Hatra, the last independent Semitic town in Mesopotamia, had been conquered by Shapur. Yet in spite of this steady eclipse the Semites had had, in Elagabalus and

Philip, at least two representatives among the Roman emperors; the immense wealth of Syria was in Semitic hands, and the inland trade of the caravans almost wholly their property.

The disorganisation of the Roman Empire which followed on the capture of Valerian, combined with the fact that the Persians had gained a greater victory than they could profit by, placed the Semitic peoples of Syria and Arabia in a position of singular prominence. We must remember that, though the government of both East and West was wholly on the decline, though civilisation was doomed, yet never was there on our map a period of greater material prosperity. The sight of Syria to-day, with its rambling towns, squalor and poverty, makes it difficult at first to realise the immense profusion, splendour and opulence which obtained in the third century.

The rich corn lands produced immeasurable wealth, which was increased by the profitable traffic of the caravans from Arabia and the East. Out of these riches rose large and populous cities inhabited by a race of cosmopolitan merchants and traders and their satellites, among whom there was no ideal higher than gain and self-indulgence. The Empire did not concern them, their politics were municipal, their art imported; patriotism had been killed by Empire; and luxury and money were the only objects of serious consideration. There were no traditions of ancient virtue to check excess; and consequently the cultured vice of the decadent Greek, the frenzied beastliness of the frantic superstitions of the East, the soft effeminacy of Egypt and the gross lewdness of Rome flourished and mingled together on this congenial soil. Huge temples, florid and debased, were built in honour of gods, too foul to name, whose priests, the self-gelt eunuch and the honoured prostitute, leered invitation from the steps on the passers-by to enter and adore. Theatres, baths, and taverns stood in every street, thronged with their attendant ministers of vice, who scientifically plundered the large floating population of legionaries, muleteers, merchants, caravan masters and officials.

This greasy, voluptuous, busy world of Syria had been cut off from the East by two hundred years of war; all trade and traffic with the East had been squeezed into one channel—the desert route between Damascus and the Euphrates; and here, and here

alone, could merchandise pass in safety from Hither Asia to the Mediterranean. The desert Arabs who lived on the route waxed rich and powerful on this artificial trade, and became the contractors, transporters, merchants, middlemen, and guards of every bale of goods which passed from East to West or from West to East. As the centuries rolled by the trade increased, until the site of one constant desert spring, named Tadmor or Palmyra, changed from a camp to a village, from a village to a town, from a town to an immense city of caravanserais and hostels, intersected with vast colonnades, dominated by a gigantic shrine, and surrounded by the tower tombs of its great citizens. A small nomadic tribe had been transformed into a powerful and wealthy aristocracy; an ordinary desert Shaykh had changed into one of the greatest representatives of wealth and power within the pale of civilisation.

This ruler had inherited the magnificent city from his father. His youth had been spent among the tents of the Arabs dependent on his paternal city, and from them he imbibed those precepts of diplomacy and strategy which are a part of the equipment of every desert Shaykh. In the capture of Valerian, Odenathus perceived the end of the Roman Empire in the East, for a time at least, and realised that his city was by reason of its enormous wealth a natural bait to the Persians. The instinct of the Arab taught him to make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness; and accordingly an embassy was despatched to Shapur, armed with magnificent gifts and instructed to present to the Persian a most humble epistle, expressing the admiration, respect, and undying loyalty of Odenathus to the conqueror.

Shapur was either sharp enough to detect the self-interest which prompted this action, or careless enough to under-estimate the military forces at the disposal of the Palmyrene. At any rate, he treated the missive with contempt, cursed the ambassadors, tore up the letter, and threw the presents into a river. Odenathus was by no means disconcerted at this rebuff; he instantly entered into negotiations with the Romans, and made arrangements to co-operate with them against the Persian King.

Meanwhile, Shapur's army, glutted with the plunder of Cappadocia and Cilicia and encumbered with prisoners and

spoils, commenced a retreat towards Mesopotamia. The Romans followed up the retirement of the Persians, and when the latter drew near the Euphrates they became the object of the attentions of clouds of Bedawin headed by Odenathus. Trammelled by a huge mass of baggage, the Persian army experienced some of the difficulties suffered by Valerian before he fell into their hands. They were no longer operating on their own grassy plains of Mesopotamia, where their provender and stores needed no attention, where every dimple in the ground was familiar to them, and every city a friendly refuge. They were, on the contrary, passing through a lonesome and inhospitable country, infested with thousands of Arabs, equal if not superior to them in horsemanship and valour, adepts in the arts of desert warfare, and inflamed by a greed for plunder, which inspires the heart of the desert men with as much eagerness for battle as either patriotism or a sense of injustice can achieve.

Odenathus was a courageous and brilliant general. He never gave the unwieldy Persian forces a moment's rest or peace as long as they were in the desert; and when they at last reached the Euphrates, he fell upon them with overwhelming numbers as they were crossing. Shapur had to fly for his life, his army was scattered and discomfited, and worst of all, his treasures, his spoils and his harem fell into the hands of the Palmyrene. Odenathus must have had to hand other troops than the Bedawin, for after his victory he proceeded to Nisibis, which he reduced, and thence followed Shapur to Ctesiphon, which he besieged.

While the Persians were suffering these reverses at the hands of the Palmyrenes, matters were not progressing favourably for the Romans in other parts of Asia. The Gothic pirates, who had for a moment been overawed by the passage of Valerian, now threw themselves on Asia Minor with redoubled fury. The great temple of Diana at Ephesus was destroyed, the cities of Bithynia were burnt or sacked by the wild savages, who slew the weak and cultured and drew the strong and discontented to their ranks; they sailed unchecked through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, swooped on the coast cities, raided into the interior, and slipped away to their ships before forces could be levied to oppose them.

While chaos reigned in the Peninsula, a sinister ruffian named Macrianus, who was suspected of having been the cause of Valerian's disaster, proclaimed himself Emperor; and having gained over other generals to his side, established himself in Syria.

Odenathus now began to have some glimmerings of the possibilities of the future, and returned home hot-foot from Babylonia. Under pretence of loyalty to the Empire, he proceeded to Emesa and prevailed on the inhabitants to slay the representatives of Macrianus. This action made him the chief ruler in Syria and Mesopotamia; but with great adroitness he abstained from taking the title of Emperor which had proved so fatal to others, and accepted from Gallienus the position of Commander-in-Chief in the East.

After he had attained this rank Odenathus set to work to subdue all the countries within reach of his arms: Armenia and Egypt were brought under his sway; he again besieged Ctesiphon; and it is even hinted that he did something towards driving the Goths out of Asia Minor. The records, however, are fragmentary and contradictory, and little that is definite can be ascertained save that he was continually engaged in fighting, and that while he was absent in the east or the north, his wife, the beautiful and queenly Zenobia, directed his affairs at home.

The power of Palmyra continued to increase and flourish at the expense of the tottering Empire in the west. Raid upon raid by the barbarians, followed by one mutiny after another, served to weaken its power; and Odenathus' unbroken series of successes made the allegiance which he owed to Rome of a more and more formal nature. While Odenathus guarded the northern and eastern frontiers against the Goths and Persians, Zenobia attended to the affairs of Egypt and Syria. Neither husband nor wife questioned Rome as to what course they should pursue; why should they, indeed, since between their provinces and the Capital there were generally three or four independent Emperors each striving to attain supreme command?

This condition of affairs was, however, not destined to last. Claudius was made Emperor after the murder of Gallienus in 268, and during a reign of two years he strove manfully to reorganise the waning powers of Rome; he drove out the

barbarians, and sternly repressed mutinies and revolts; but just as he was about to turn his attention to the east, he died. His office fell into the hands of Aurelian, one of those stern and capable soldiers whom Rome had lacked since the days of Severus. For two years more Aurelian devoted his energies to re-uniting the Empire in the west. By 271 he had completed his labours, and stood at the head of a faithful and victorious army ready to move out towards the east.

Odenathus and Zenobia had grown more and more careless of the Roman power; and just as Aurelian had settled the affairs of his European provinces, the Palmyrenes took the plunge into open rebellion and proclaimed themselves independent. The first sign of the Roman power was the assassination of Odenathus at Emesa (Homs); but Zenobia was so confident of her strength that she prepared to face Aurelian alone. She had sufficient force to warrant her doing so: the whole of Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor as far as Angora was on her side; she could calculate on the support of the legions in those districts; and she further had, as she deemed, an inaccessible retreat in the desert, where strong walls and Bedawin support would give pause to any commander who thought of pursuit. Besides this, she had made alliance with the Persians, who probably preferred an Arab to a Roman Empire as less formidable if equally distasteful.

Aurelian was not a man to be frightened by parade, and quickly put the strength of Palmyra to the test. The inhabitants of the peninsula of Asia Minor gave as little trouble to Aurelian as they had to any other conqueror, and he was able to march rapidly on Antioch. There he met an army of inferior Roman legionaries under Arab commanders, which he defeated without difficulty, not only at Antioch but at Emesa. The glittering bubble of Palmyrene ascendency had been pricked: all Syria welcomed Aurelian as it had welcomed Romans, Parthians, Persians; as it had welcomed Alexander; and as it would welcome England, France, or Germany to-day. The Syrian Arab has long had the knack of falling in with the plans of a successful conqueror.

Zenobia and her forces retreated to Palmyra. All was not lost: a few mercenary Romans had been killed in battle; some easily gained territory had been abandoned; but she counted on

the deserts checking Aurelian's pursuit, on promises of Persian relief and the loyalty of the Arabs. Aurelian braved the terrors of the desert and advanced toward Palmyra. The Bedawin, who had hitherto harassed the Roman convoys in Syria, perceiving that Aurelian was likely to be successful, abandoned their Queen and sided with the Emperor; a feeble attempt by the Persians to relieve the town was beaten off without difficulty, and the huge merchant city with all its wealth lay at the mercy of Rome. Zenobia, in despair, endeavoured to escape by night, but was captured, and a little later the town surrendered. The Queen was spared, but the Lords of Palmyra were executed without mercy, and the city was pardoned at the price of its wealth.

On the fall of Palmyra, peace was restored in the East. The victories of Odenathus had unintentionally won back for Rome the lost provinces of Upper Mesopotamia, and the blows he had delivered against Persia had stricken her too heavily to admit of any hope of her retaking them from Aurelian, to whom they became subject almost automatically on the capture of Zenobia. In a few years Palmyra degenerated from a world capital to a petty trading town; then to a more fortified post; and so at last to a few mud hovels in the court of the temple, as it remains to this day.

I have ventured to give the story of Palmyra at a length which some may consider out of proportion to the brevity of the rest of these chapters; but I submit that the sudden rise of the Palmyrene power is an important index of Semitic vitality, and was indeed a forerunner of the stupendous forces which Arabia was destined to let loose upon the world at a later date. Semitic civilisations are like the desert seeds. In midsummer the scorching rocks are bare, the valleys are desolate; a few days of spring rains and the whole land is ablaze with a thousand flowers whose scent makes the air faint, and the valleys are thick with lush green grass; yet again in a few weeks the flowers are but dust and the pasture withered to a few whispering patches of dead rushes—but still the dormant principle is there, waiting only for the inevitable chance which will conjure it once more into brief but exuberant life.

During the chaotic period between the capture of Valerian

and the accession of Aurelian, the Persians had invaded Armenia from the south and east, massacred the whole of the surviving Arsacids (with the exception of one boy named Tiridates), and nominally reduced the country to a province. Aurelian laid his plans for the invasion of Armenia and Persia with considerable skill, and made a treaty with the barbarous Alans on the Caspian shores, by which they agreed to invade the rear of his enemies' lands while he advanced from the west; but the scheme was not carried out, for on the eve of his departure Aurelian met at Heraclea the usual fate of Emperors. Hardly was his successor, Tacitus, named Emperor, than the Alans, who had long been expecting the promised bribe, grew tired of waiting and proceeded westwards to fetch it for themselves. Neither the Armenians nor the Persians delayed the nomads in their raid, and Tacitus and his troops only arrived at the Bosphorus when the whole of Asia Minor had been crossed by the invaders, who not only burnt such cities as lay in their path, but clamoured loudly for the gold which they considered their due. Tacitus managed to buy off many tribesmen; but some, emboldened by success, attempted to hold their ground, and were only driven out with difficulty.

The course of this raid is of interest because it is a real sign of the relapse of Asia Minor into barbarism. Ever since the days of the Gauls such savages as had entered the country had come only to plunder and retire. Now, however, we see nomads who desire to stay; which shows that the powers of resistance were breaking down, and that certain tracts of country were so completely ruined that small bodies of barbarians were prepared to settle in them without fear of subsequent massacre. Roman prestige was declining, and the Persian monarchy was even more incoherent and nebulous. Indeed, a series of rebellions and barbarian raids in the Far East reduced Persian power to such a state of impotence, that in 282 the Romans crossed the Tigris near Ctesiphon and marched further east than any Europeans had been since the days of Alexander the Great, their advance being only stopped by the dramatic death of the Emperor Carus, who was struck by lightning in the middle of his troops.

In 284, on the accession of Diocletian, the Persian power had sunk to so low an ebb that the Roman Emperor was able to adjust his frontier in northern Mesopotamia and to establish his

influence in Armenia on a basis more permanent than had been attempted since Corbulo's expedition. It was agreed that a line drawn from Nisibis to the mouth of the Khabur should be the southern boundary of Rome, while beyond the Tigris the district of the Corduene was surrendered by the Persians.

The eastern frontier designed by Diocletian cannot fail to strike the observer as a masterpiece of policy. The whole breadth of Armenia stretching right down into Atropatene constituted a formidable obstacle to Persian or barbarian invasion from the north-east; the wild mountain tribes of the Corduene served a similar purpose by threatening the flank of any attempt at invasion of Mesopotamia through Assyria. The only weak point in the scheme was the southern frontier between Nisibis and the junction of the rivers Khabur and Euphrates. This indeed was open to attack, and the only remedy lay in supplying the defensive deficiencies of nature by art. Circesium, a trading town at the extreme southern limit of the Roman dominion, was strongly fortified and garrisoned, and the fortress villages of the district of Singara (the modern Sinjar) were so prepared as to form a strong outpost in the Mesopotamian prairies against incursions of the Arabs.

Tiridates, who had been rescued in infancy from the massacre of the Arsacids of Armenia, had grown to manhood and had distinguished himself by his bravery while serving with the Roman armies. Tiridates was young, ambitious, brave, and capable; he was Roman by education and training, and attached to the Empire by all the associations of his youth and every tie of hospitality. In Tiridates centred every hope of a reformation of the Armenian State. He was the last living representative of the Armenian branch of the Arsacid family; his name still held some of the magic of its influence over those tribal lords who had for so long been the vassals of his house, and who now groaned under the detestable innovation of a reasonable government. For the Persians had endeavoured to assimilate Armenia by abolishing the ancient superstitions, introducing a certain amount of order into the land, curtailing the powers of the nobles and subjecting them to an alien bureaucracy.

In Tiridates, Diocletian saw a tool with which to mould his policy. Though Persia was distracted by a revolution and lay an

easy prey to her enemies, the Roman Emperor had not at his disposal troops for an offensive campaign in Mesopotamia ; but in Armenia, where the government was already unpopular and necessarily weakened by the civil war, it was not difficult to effect a diversion. Tiridates was sent to the eastern frontier of Cappadocia, with a small following of Roman troops, to make an attempt on the crown of Armenia. As might be expected, the highland chieftains rallied to his standard, their followers and tribesmen rose to support his cause, and in some cases even Persian governors went over to his side.

For a time Sassanian rule was abolished in Armenia, and the country reverted to its original condition, Tiridates becoming over-lord of the numerous tribal nobles, who maintained a semi-independent sway over their respective clans. It is impossible to define the extent of country in which Tiridates was acknowledged as king, but we may suppose that wherever the Arsacid tradition held a place in the minds of the nobility, there Tiridates was accepted. The enthusiasm for his house, perhaps intense only in the vicinity of Lake Van, must have proportionately diminished in warmth eastward and southward, where the remembrance of the glories of Parthia had been effaced by the later wars of the Romans and Sassanians, and the more pressing question of eastern or western supremacy had dismissed the resuscitation of the Arsacids from practical politics.

The spread of Christianity in Syria, Asia Minor, and Armenia is a subject too large to be treated in this volume. It would, however, perhaps not be out of place to point out here that, as regards the peninsula of Asia Minor, the new belief had spread rapidly among the lower population wherever Greek was spoken ; and that the ravages of the Goths had, by the destruction of temples and monuments, possibly advanced the cause of Christendom by throwing discredit on the old worship. But amongst the ignorant rural population one may imagine that so pure and exalted a religion as Christianity made no very rapid progress ; while in Syria it was confined to the Greek cities, and the country people still clung to the old shrines of Bambyce, Baalbek, and Emesa.

As regards Armenia, the Christian religion received a great impetus from the conversion of Tiridates, who either from policy

or from conviction suddenly extended his patronage to the faith. Personally I am quite prepared to accept the miracle which Moses and Chamish record to have been the cause of Tiridates' conversion. On the other hand, there are plenty of good reasons why Tiridates should have adopted Christianity. In the first place, the old gods had been forcibly displaced by Zoroastrianism under the Persian rule, their temples had been destroyed and sacred fires lighted in their place; and during a period of twenty years no serious attempt had been made to reinstate their worship. It may also be presumed that the worship of these gods had been confined rather to the townsmen and dwellers in the valleys than to the mountaineers, whose distinct tribal life may have led to a simple and dull combination of fetichism and ancestor worship, a substratum of which may be detected in the customs and beliefs of the Moslem Kurds to this day.

When Tiridates arrived in Armenia he found a divided and confused country, which possessed no sign or sentiment of unity other than the general dislike of a foreign rule, and a tradition that an Arsacid should be supreme. Tiridates' task was to give his peoples some distinct mark by which to separate them from the Persians; for the great policy of the Sassanians had been the unification of their Empire by the enforcement of the Zoroastrian religion. The strongest bond that Tiridates could have formed with which to unite his peoples would be the setting up of a new and distinct State religion in his own country, diametrically opposed to the beliefs of the Magi, which would not only increase the dislike subsisting between his subjects and the Persians, but would give them some common cause for which to fight against the invading armies of the Sassanians.

These are mere speculations, however; and, whatever the cause, the fact remains that Tiridates became a Christian, and with the help of St. Gregory the Illuminator established the Christian faith in Armenia. The records of the wholesale conversion of the inhabitants of Armenia which followed do not seem devoid of truth or improbable. The old gods were dead; Zoroastrianism was disliked because it was Persian; the new religion had not to combat a wealthy and interested pagan priesthood; it had the approbation of the king and his officers and the ill-will

of no one. Consequently, why should we doubt that it was generally and immediately accepted by the population at large? However, when a large and extended conversion of this kind takes place we are at liberty to doubt the fervour of a great number of the proselytes. In the plains and cities, where the population was tranquil and the king and his ministers powerful, no doubt the priests and bishops of Gregory firmly implanted their beliefs and ceremonies in the hearts of the people. But on the hills and mountains, where the nobles reigned in semi-independence, letters were and are still unknown. Tribal feuds forbade communication and traffic with the outer world, a knowledge of which was only derived by the clansmen from brief visits on plundering expeditions or the departure and return of levies in time of war. It seems improbable that the acceptance of Christianity was other than a formal acquiescence in what might be conceived the whim of a monarch, or in some cases not even so much as that.

It must be borne in mind that the foregoing remarks apply only to the eastern portions of Armenia; for the cities of Armenia Minor which had been incorporated in the Roman provinces were impregnated with Christianity, as well as the cities of Edessa (Urfa) and Samosata (Samsat).

From the abdication of Diocletian to the early part of the seventh century the constant war between Persians and Romans continued with the same persistence as in the past. Army after army fought and refought the old battle, and the only difference between the earlier and the later wars is that as time went on the antagonists mutually pierced further and further into each other's territories. Again and again the Romans invaded southern Mesopotamia; again and again the Persians crossed the Euphrates and ravaged Cilicia, Cappodocia, and northern Syria. Yet neither of the rival powers ever really got the better of the other. The Persian Empire, loosely knit and ill-disciplined, was always checked by the assassination of the king, an insurrection among the nobles, or a barbarian invasion from the far East; the Romans, cut off from Rome and now established in Constantinople, were gradually sinking under the weight of barbarian pressure on the Danube, and were unable to consolidate such victories as they gained.

These two decrepit Empires continued the long vain struggle preparing the way for their mutual destruction. The arts flagged and failed, commerce declined; and in both territories civilisation and order began wholly to decay. The change that was coming over this old and weary world is nowhere more remarkable than in the fact that, in the Roman area, the native Isaurian mountaineers began not only to assume independence, but actually to raid and harry the richer districts of Asia Minor; while in Syria the Bedawin, who had been of no account since the fall of Palmyra, began once again to encroach upon the cultivated lands. As for Persia, Turks were ever pressing her from the east, and Alans and Khazars raided Media and Assyria from the Caucasus; while far in the south the desert Arabs had pushed their way up as far as Hira, where an independent kingdom was established under an Arabian king.

The kingdom of Armenia, so firmly re-established by Diocletian, did not last for long; its history from the death of Tiridates onward is one long chronicle of invasions, rebellions, intrigues of Romans and Persians, interspersed with betrayals and assassinations. The natural cleavage of its inhabitants into pastoral mountaineers and cultivators of the plains was accentuated by the fact that the mountaineers seemed to have remained pagans, while the husbandmen and merchants had become Christians—the lowlanders leaned toward the Emperor and Christianity, while the shepherd chieftains became the playthings of the Persian King of Kings. When the last independent King, Bahram, resigned in 430, Armenia was nominally divided between her two neighbours of the east and west, but in reality became merely the raiding ground of the Imperial and Persian armies.

The final struggle came with the war between Heraclius and Khosrau. Under the latter the Persians conquered from the Euphrates to North Africa, and from Aleppo to Constantinople; yet the armies of Heraclius penetrated into the heart of Media. Thus ended the last great Persian War. On the day when it came to a close there were large Persian forces encamped on the Bosphorus, and successful Roman troops within hail of Urumia. The two great Empires had stretched one another on the rack of war so long, that neither was capable of resistance or cohesion.

At such a point as this we may indeed look for the dawn of a new era—and not without cause, for the sun at Mecca was already high above the horizon.

Before proceeding further, however, it would perhaps be well to take a brief survey of the condition in the year 629 of the lands with which we are interested. Syria was now an impoverished and stricken land, and her great cities, though still populated, must have been encumbered with ruins which the public funds were not sufficient to remove. Damascus and Jerusalem themselves had not recovered from the effects of the long and terrible siege; Amman and Gerash had declined into wretched villages under the sway and lordship of the Bedawin. The Hauran, perhaps, still showed signs of the prosperity for which it had been noted in the days of Trajan; but the wretched buildings and rude inscriptions of this date all point to a sad and depressing decline. Out in the desert, Palmyra stood empty and desolate save for a garrison in the castle.

On the coasts and in the Lebanon a shadow of the former business and wealth was still to be seen; but in the north, ruin, desolation and abandonment must have been the common state of the country, which had been raided with unfailing regularity for one hundred years and had been held by an enemy for fifteen. Agriculture must have declined, and the population notably decreased through the plagues and distresses from which it had suffered.

Cappadocia had insensibly sunk into barbarism; and the great basilicas and cities, which the rude countrymen could neither repair nor restore, had been levelled with the ground.

The Anatolian peninsula had been ploughed and harrowed by the Persian armies; the great cities had been plundered and sacked. The long occupation by the invaders must have dislocated if not utterly destroyed the internal commerce, and the provinces which had already been ground down by excessive taxation under Maurice must have been almost completely crushed by foreign dominion.

Armenia had sunk into a condition of chronic disunion and anarchy. The jealous and mercenary nobles had changed allegiance time and again; and when, owing to the absence of Romans and Persians from their dominions, they could not

betray their masters, they spent their time in fighting one another.

If the victorious Roman Emperor's realms were in a parlous condition, those of the defeated Persian monarch were in one which was possibly worse. The returning armies, who by the treaties of Heraclius were evacuating Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor, were filled with a spirit of mutiny and discontent. The Khazars, who had been urged on to harry the depleted provinces of Iran, did not feel bound to observe the peaceful treaties and engagements of their patron and continued to devastate the plains of Urumia. On the frontiers of the Oxus discontent and rebellion threatened to break out at any moment; in the capital chaos and confusion reigned; while on the desert borders the Arabs were beginning to realise their own strength and their neighbours' weakness. In the Empire of the Caesars we see a realm weakened and grievously wounded, but in that of the Sassanians one on the verge of dissolution. The swords which were to deliver the final blow to both were already forged, and eager hands were being stretched out to grasp them.

On a certain day a Bedawi rode into Bostra with a letter from Arabia for the Emperor of the Greeks. It was signed by one Mohammed, who called himself the "Apostle of God."

# CHAPTER VII

## IN PRINCIPIO

AT the time of the birth of Mohammed, Arabia, as it has ever been, was partly subject, partly waste, and partly independent, entirely divided, and, if I may be permitted a personal opinion, extremely uninteresting. To the north, with a capital at Amman, was the treacherous unstable state of the Ghassanids, who had rendered doubtful services to Belisarius, had helped Heraclius feebly, and who gave a kind of fitful allegiance to the Government of Constantinople—true Arabs of the desert, ever eager to revolt, always willing to compromise, never ready to keep their engagements, always at the mercy of the feeblest of organised governments, yet never entirely submissive. This state of the Ghassanids embraced the Hauran and a goodly portion of the lands east of Jordan, Christian in name, even as are some of the desert tribes of Moslems to-day—a patter of prayers and minor curse words; but of speculation, fanaticism, prejudice, or sincere belief perhaps not a trace.

Until the birth of Mohammed, the Kingdom of Hira occupied in regard to Persia a position similar to that held by the Ghassanids with respect to Byzantium, save that as the land of Irak was rich and had for countless ages been the seat of agricultural industry, the principality was a more definite and organised state, of which the ruling family, though Arabian, was settled, cultured, and stable.

Far to the south, in Yemen, was an Arab state which, after a number of vicissitudes, had been conquered by the Abyssinians and then delivered by the Persians; and which shortly after Mohammed's birth had relapsed once more to a condition of

practical independence, yet still owing a kind of vague allegiance to Persia.

The central waste of the peninsula was then, as now, a seething caldron of quarrelling tribal nomads. Now and again one clan would assert its supremacy, master the others, and under a great leader would sally forth to plunder and raid in Syria and Mesopotamia. When this leader died, such a tribe rapidly lost its prestige and another would take its place; and so from century to century, quarrellings, migrations, compacts, alliances, and wars formed the dreary routine of desert politics.[1]

The Bedawi in history is like a squirrel in his revolving cage: sometimes he sits still, sometimes the wheel turns round, sometimes it whirls in a mad blurred circle—but the prisoner and his prison remain stationary. The world was jolted out of its course by the genius of Mohammed. Mohammed thought to unite the world in peace and brotherhood. The strain was great, the struggle violent; half the globe was swamped in the effort; history, order, sequence, time, and place were disjointed, while new worlds, new thoughts, evolved themselves amid centuries of chaos. All is changed, all touched, all varied, all twisted from its ordered place—with one exception, and that is Arabia itself. The centre, fount, and cause alone remains as in the days of ignorance; and if there be a purgatory for false Prophets, surely Mohammed lies chained, Prometheus-like, on some parched eminence in Nejd whence he can view a land unchanging and unchanged.

In the mercantile centre of this desert land stood the town of Mecca, whither for ages a succession of tribes had drifted, and from tents and warrings had taken to houses and trade. In this city there stood a black rock; and if the rebellious and fickle Arabs of the peninsula could be said to hold anything in esteem it was that lump of stone. Around that fetish had been

[1] I have seen too much of this kind of barren history in the actual process of formation to weary the reader or myself by a recital of the centuries of snarling and squabbling which preceded the birth of Mohammed. When the horsemen are on the sky-line and the beards wag in the tent of council, when the stock has been plundered but yesterday, and the payment of the blood fine is being fixed for to-morrow, this kind of thing is dull enough; when the very names of the parties in these trivial affairs are almost forgotten, it would be more than tedious to lug them out of their merited obscurity.

woven the legends and traditions of ages, and from the inchoate mass had arisen a kind of religion. Jewish lore, pagan superstitions, curious fancies, the flotsam and jetsam of Semitic minds, irregular, disordered, and unrestrained, gathered around the Ka'ba and formed a creed to all appearances as unmeaning and shapeless as its material symbol. Yet annually at a certain season pilgrims would flock from all parts to kiss the Ka'ba and spend their gold in the bazaars of the city ; the unending and meaningless wars came to a close, and for four months the Arabs were satisfied to contend among themselves with weapons of which they were the greatest masters, with poetry, with commercial acumen, with repartee, and with virulent and garrulous abuse. The facts that Mecca was once a great trade centre, that it derived its importance from a mysterious shrine, that its strength lay in the surrounding nomad tribes, suggest a peculiar and striking resemblance to the cities of Palmyra and Petra ; but Mecca, being far away in the heart of Arabia, naturally lacked the glory and strength of those townships—commerce had strayed far afield from its precincts long before she could carry with her the luxury, the art, the complexity of the Mediterranean sea-board.

It was into this strange, babbling world of heat and wrath and drought that there a child was born to Amina the wife of Abdallah, the slave of God and youngest son of Abdu'l-Muttalib the chiefest of the chieftains of Mecca. Before the weakling babe sprawled in the midwife's arms, before the shrill cries of the helpers announced that another man had come to Mecca, Abdallah had been laid to rest in distant Medina, and it was an orphan who received the name of Mohammed.

According to the custom of his city, the child was put out to nurse among the nomads, where the keen air of the desert might fill his lungs, the wholesome breast of the foster-mother nourish his limbs, and the noble dialect of the wildlings form his first lispings. So it happened that the frail infant on whose life so much depended was carried away by a Bedawiyah wife, to be slung in a poke from camp to camp, to roll uncovered in the broiling sun, to play and crawl amidst the heels of mares and stallions, to drink its fill of the milk of the flocks, to thrive or perish as chance might direct.

The days and months rolled on, and Mohammed was finally

handed over to his family, a stout boy in his sixth or seventh year. When Amina received her son from the hands of the faithful nurse, she decided to carry him away to Medina, that he might see the tomb of his father and visit the kinsfolk of his father's mother who dwelt there. At Medina, the little boy sported with the children, ran along the flat roofs of the towering houses, plunged and swam in the cool fountains of the court-yards, until the widow's visit came to an end and she set out to return to Mecca. Mohammed never knew his father, and his mother was not destined to bear him company for long; the hard journey, the burning sun of the desert, struck down the soft Meccan woman accustomed only to the coolness of the towns, and Mohammed was handed over to his grandfather, the old chieftain of Mecca, Abdu'l-Muttalib. Soon, however, the Patriarch himself is called to his account; and as the funeral procession lurches and staggers to the grave-yard, Mohammed runs after him for the last time, weeping as if his little heart would break.

The desolate child was now attached to his uncle Abu Talib, and again Heaven vouchsafed a kind protector to the orphan. Abu Talib, however, was poor and had to earn his bread and could not pass his days in giving it as his father had done before him; so presently he set out to Syria on a trading expedition, and somewhere along with the bales of merchandise he carried the adopted child. Thus Mohammed was taken up to the borders of the great world where men lived in cities larger than Mecca, where rumours and talk were no longer only of tribal rights but of great wars and devastations, of the taxes of the new Emperor, Maurice, of the gloomy news from Italy, of the bribery of officials, and the terror of the Persians. Mohammed must have been impressed by the wealth and variety of the towns he saw, even as is the modern Bedawi impressed by the faded glories of Constantinople of to-day. It was not for the little Arab boy to detect the falling Empire in the shrinking towns, the lawless soldiery, the incoherent government, the unpaid levies, the declining trade.

When Mohammed first went to Bostra (the Bozra of Moab, in the Bible) he must have followed the great Roman Road, which stretches like a ruler laid across the desert. Those miles upon

miles of paved, level causeway must have struck the enquiring mind even then with some of the awe with which they impress one to-day ; and when the great dark walls of the city rose up before him and he watched them loom taller and taller, as the slowly moving caravan approached them, he must have been overcome with wonder. Hour by hour the city grows greater and greater as one rides in from the south-west ; and when finally the caravan of Abu Talib unloaded, Mohammed must have had leisure to ponder over the marvels of the new world unveiled to him. The great reservoir, the mighty theatre, the stately baths, the solid walls, the causeways, the great gates and gloomy archways, and, beyond, the countless cities of the Hauran plain, many of which, as Abu Talib might have told the lad, were greater than Bostra—all these things must have amazed the thoughtful, bright-eyed boy. Then, again, who were those dark-robed men to whom all paid such deference? What were those great and more modern buildings constructed from ancient fragments? What was that sweet music? Why did these men kneel before crosses and pictures in those dark, cloistered churches, where the dim lights penetrated dully through clouds of sweet-smelling incense? "Those men are priests and monks who can read out of the books, O my son." "Read? What is read? What is book?" Then perhaps did the little boy creep away and talk in his own tongue with one of those holy men, and gather that strange half-knowledge which has set three continents atilt—who knows?

After the business of the expedition to Bostra had been completed, Mohammed was sent back to Mecca and vanished into obscurity. Sometimes he tended the flocks without the city, at others accompanied his kinsmen as arrow-bearer to the wars, for as such the insignificant brawls and skirmishes of the tribes around Mecca are dignified. The youth must, however, have shown some promise of intelligence and perspicacity, for presently his uncle Abu Talib chose him as a leader of caravans, and it fell out that his first mission was to pilot to Syria merchandise of a rich widow named Khadijah. This was Mohammed's first trial in leadership and his first grasp of power. Seemingly all went prosperously; the goods of the fair and buxom matron of the Koraysh were disposed of to the Syrian

merchants at a profit, and the young caravan-master returned to his mistress with substantial gains in their stead.

Khadijah was sitting on the house-top, waiting for the news, when her young servant galloped up with the glad tidings of success. Twice had she yielded herself to the embraces of a husband, twice had she been widowed; the beauty and intelligence of her domestic captured her susceptible heart for a third time. Mohammed was a youth of a noble but impoverished family, Khadijah one of the wealthiest women in Mecca, far beyond his approach; for him to have proposed would have been impossible, but for the amorous widow to expose the state of her affections was easy, for so strong a hold had love obtained on her that it was beyond her power to conceal it.

On the day he married Khadijah, Mohammed was relieved of all worldly troubles, and never again does he seem to have engaged in business. In the silence of the desert night, in the bright heat of noontide desert day, he, as do all men, had known and felt himself alone yet not in solitude, for the desert is of God and in the desert no man may deny Him. In the bazaars the voices of men, the buildings of men's hands, kill the knowledge innate; in the forest and garden the voice of Nature, the busy handmaiden, distracts; but in the desert, Nature and man are not—yet the desert is not dead, it is not empty. Mohammed the wandering child learned this; Mohammed the boy shepherd was confirmed of this; Mohammed the caravan-master knew this.

Yet there came the distractions, the idolatry of the Ka'ba and the voices of men—the sweet-smelling incense of Bostra and the chants of the monks—the smiling scorn of the Jews and their pride in their book. "God is one," cries the voice of the desert; "God is stone," comes from the Ka'ba; "God is three, God is man," mutters the monk; "God is mine alone," sneers the Jew—are not these thoughts, if sufficiently pondered upon, enough to wrench the bosom of the most impassive and immovable? Yet Mohammed was neither; he was strong in passionate and wild affection, quick to tears and sudden in anger, a man with a mighty heart in which waged a fierce war of conviction, doubt, and confusion.

The voice of the desert he knew to be true; the voice of the

Ka'ba he had heard from his childhood; the voice of the Scriptures was vague, distant, and incoherent. Yet all moved him strongly; and even as have men in the past, and even as will they in the future, Mohammed groaned in the sore stress for light. Who shall judge him as he comes reeling down from the mountain to pour out his tale of oppression and doubt to Khadijah; and who shall judge that faithful wife as she soothes and comforts his misery of soul? Racked in that awful anguish, Mohammed wanders hither and thither seeking rest and obtaining none; now he will dash himself among the rocks, now endeavour to stop his ears against the conflicting voices which rend his spirit; his body and mind grow weaker under the mental torment; he yields to the temptation as a man yielding to vertigo, and hurls himself into space, gasping the words formed on his lips. In measured rhyming cadence the words break out—it is sense he speaks, not the babbling of a soothsayer! It is truth he speaks, not a lie as he had feared! It is inspiration, and the lines burst forth in a torrent: "Recite in the NAME of the LORD who created . . . . the LORD who created man. . . ."

The first *sura* of the Koran has been uttered; Mohammed has accepted himself as a prophet, and now as a prophet he speaks.

His first vehement preachings touched but a few. Khadijah, the faithful, as might be expected, was ready to accept anything her hero wished, and must have been too overjoyed to see the clouds dispelled from his brow to question the worthiness of his cause. Ali, a son of Abu Talib whom Mohammed had adopted to relieve the poverty of his early protector, also gave ear. Zeid, a slave whom he had freed and treated with gentleness, was open to conviction; but elsewhere the people were incurious and apathetic, for Arabs are prone to be enthralled in the politics, the quarrels, and the bargains of the hour.

There was one man, however, who seems to have watched the movements of Mohammed with the keenest interest, and he was that rarity among Arabs—a true friend. To him Mohammed was a friend, a leader, and a prophet, to be assisted at cost even of life, to be followed even to inevitable doom, and to be believed in the face of all disproof. This faithful and devoted soul was

Abu Bekr, the simplest and most lovable man Arabia has ever put forth.

The worth of Abu Bekr won over a few others, among whom Othman alone stands out pre-eminent; for the rest, only slaves and obscure persons gave ear to the words of the preacher. After a weary struggle of four years, not more than forty persons could be said to have been affected by the fervent appeals and fiery threats of the son of Abdallah. Gradually, however, he began to win his way; and one of the forces which assisted him more than any other is still the grand sustaining and vital principle of his religion to-day—namely, that once a man accepted his creed, the conversion was immutable, unchangeable, and unassailable. The weak might prevaricate and lie, but they remained Moslems; the turbulent might rebel and fret, but they were of Islam.

The years passed on and the small congregation grew into a compact little community, each man persistently supporting the statements of the master, cursing the dumb idols around the Ka'ba, and exhorting his fellows to abjure the worship of all save the one God. Presently the great men of the Koraysh perceived that there was something stirring in Mecca, that there was a new faction among the factions, and that this faction was striking at the one thing of importance in the city, the sacred shrine and its accessories. The haughty chieftains cared perhaps for neither the Gods nor the Ka'ba in themselves; but custom is sacred to the Arabs because it is a custom, and none knew better than the tribal leaders that the faction of to-day may be the tyrant of to-morrow.

Consequently the new faith was attacked—not at the head, for he was bound by ties of blood, but at the tail, for they were slaves and outcasts. Mohammed preached, but none listened. Many admitted the possibility of his mission, but custom was in possession and could not be overthrown; and then there arose in the mind of Mohammed a thought which proves him to have been an Arab of the Arabs. After all the *suras* protesting the unity and one-ness of God, after all the asseverations and thunderings on this solitary point, Mohammed dreamed of compromise. He came into the courtyard of the Ka'ba, and admitted that the minor deities perhaps were saints, perhaps

might intercede. Doubtless he could have bitten his tongue off as these words fell from his lips, even when the Koraysh accepted his teaching as one man—but still for a moment he wavered, and in that wavering we may trace much.

Mohammed's hesitation was not of long duration. Ere a day had elapsed, he confessed that he had betrayed his belief and that the devil had mastered his tongue, and with a noble courage cursed the idolatry of the Ka'ba with redoubled vigour. When the men of the Koraysh saw that there would be no peace and no compromise with the leader of the new faction, they determined to crush it by all the means in their power; but indeed their powers were limited enough, for among the Moslems there were men of the Koraysh, and all the complex cross-currents of family honour and prejudice ran in favour of Mohammed. Abu Talib, ever revered in Mecca, extended his protection to his nephew, not that he believed in him but because he was his nephew. The Koraysh complained, but Abu Talib was as strong in the new prophet's defence as was Abu Bekr the believer. The Koraysh muttered in anger, but were helpless, until one of their leaders, Abu Jahl, endeavoured to curb Mohammed by publicly upbraiding him. Mohammed's foster-brother and uncle Hamza, hitherto a staunch agnostic,[1] took the matter as a personal affront and proclaimed his faith out of pique.

Then Omar, the most violent of the oppressors and fiercest of warriors in Mecca, succumbed not to the oratory of the Koran, but to the influence of his sister. In ungovernable passion he struck her for reciting the new law; then, overwhelmed with shame and mortification at his unknightly deed, he made amends by accepting Islam.

At these victories the ruling clan became more alarmed than before; but the bonds of blood held them from violence, and it was at length by means of a peaceful "boycott" that they endeavoured to crush the spread of the new creed. All who stood fast by Mohammed, whether on grounds of belief or friendship or blood, were to be banned and cut off from the rest of the city—they might not marry, or traffic, or speak with the remainder. For three years did Abu Talib and the relations and

[1] As regards Mohammed.

friends and converts of Mohammed remain cut off from the rest of mankind by a cruel but peaceful blockade. The nobility of Abu Talib, who never accepted the mission of his nephew as a prophet, is singularly striking and a wonderful example of the steadfast and unselfish devotion of the Arab to heroic custom. The unwritten law of the Arabs is that, right or wrong, a man shall stand by his kinsfolk. For three long years Abu Talib and his relatives with unflinching fortitude bore hunger, thirst, imprisonment, and solitude for the sake of Mohammed's liberty of speech, although many of them never pretended to admit the truth of his orations.

During this long period Mohammed, now fifty years of age, pined in the stricken and isolated quarter of the city; his family and nearest and dearest brought to the verge of ruin, yet unconvinced; the true believers but a tiny congregation of poor converts. It is impossible to believe that the man was not in earnest—mad if you will; but a scheming, crafty, vainglorious impostor, never.

After three years had passed, men learned that the deed and covenant, forbidding communion with the party of Mohammed which the Koraysh had set down in writing, had been devoured by ants, and on the ground of an "act of God" the ban was removed, and Abu Talib and his people were free to go forth. But misfortune still dogged thc steps of Mohammed. The aged Khadijah, the solace and comfort of his misery, was taken from him; and hardly had his affectionate nature recovered from the agony of this loss than Abu Talib, the generous protector of his infancy and the sole support of his middle life, was gathered in by the Sunderer of Societies.

Alone, forlorn, stricken in years, Mohammed remained behind, preaching, entreating, threatening, and commanding in turns. Gradually the body of the Moslems increased, but only slowly and by painful degrees, and at times the wretched man was driven almost to despair. At a venture he made an attempt on the neighbouring town of Tayf, only to be driven out with stones and abuse, and, crowning ignominy, to be saved from further violence by two unbelieving pagans of Mecca. But his genius ever upheld him, and his faith in his mission bore him through the sorest trials. Men scorned him, but nature obeyed him;

he roared to the winds, and his exaltation pictured companies of the Jan and spirits of the air bowing down in rapt attention. Khadijah being gone, Mohammed took to himself two wives, the one a widow Sawda, the other Ayesha, a little child to whom he was not other than ceremonially married for some years to come.

Dawn sprang up unexpectedly for the benighted Moslems. With that pertinacity which was the surest guarantee of his earnestness, Mohammed haunted the great pilgrim fairs annually held at Mecca, and at one of these, while engaged in preaching to the idle and incurious multitude, he fell in with a small party of merchants and traders from Medina.

Now Mecca and all the lands eastward and southward of the city were steeped in paganism and fetish worship; but at Medina and to the north the light of Judaism and Christianity shone fitfully above the horizon. Men knew of the one true God, and some had heard dully of a Redeemer who had come or was yet to come. The Arabs had noted how the Jews hugged themselves, saying, "No matter, one cometh presently"; and chance Christians spoke also of some Man long dead yet living Who would come again. The Ghassanid Arabs were His followers, even as was the great Emperor Caesar their master; and now, in Mecca, they heard one with a voice of gold speaking of this one God, saying that he himself was indeed the Man foretold. The idolaters, it is true, thought little of him; but to the men of Medina Mohammed seemed more probable, more in the order of things, more expected.

Further, the Medina folk were ever at variance, fighting most bloodily and expensively among themselves: a prophet, if a true one, would bring peace, unity, and wealth. Now the Arab has ever an eye on a diplomatic victory, on some wonderful compromise, some really binding treaty which cannot be overset for at least a week by any but dishonourable methods. Consequently, the speech and entreaties of Mohammed set the merchants of Medina thinking. I can see them sitting round a thorn fire talking the matter over, Mohammed having gone back to the city, over which the stars are twinkling. It must have been exactly like those interminable discussions that are taking

place even at this hour in half a hundred black tents 'twixt Diarbekir and Aden.

In due course the Medina merchants departed for their own city. A year passed, and they returned to Mecca. The seed had taken root, Medina was profoundly affected. Mohammed deputed a disciple, Musab, to assist in the conversion of the town. Again a year passed. On the appointed day the new converts return, not twelve but now seventy, to announce that peacefully and without strife Medina had submitted, and that there was in Arabia a city of which the bulk of the inhabitants were Moslems.

This rapid though gentle acquisition had not come as a shock to Mohammed. It had occupied close upon three years; but during that period he had by degrees been gaining confidence in his ultimate success, and becoming, I fear, gradually less spiritual and more egotistical. His guidance, which had hitherto led him to stern admonition and agonised entreaty, now became careless and self-confident. Where he had implored he now spoke with indifferent scorn[1]; where he had seen visions of terror he now beheld magnificent delusions. Instead of commanding him to convert mankind, Gabriel now led him on heavenly journeys; instead of imagining crowds of lesser spirits listening to his fervid preaching in the wilderness, he beheld the prophets of all ages bowing before him, acknowledging his pre-eminence and his excellence.

The Moslems of Mecca gradually migrated to Medina, the harbour of refuge. With some heroism Mohammed and the faithful Abu Bekr waited till the last of the flock had gone, and then, just as the wrath of the exasperated Koraysh began to burst all bounds, just as their curved scimitars were sharpened, and their hearts were hardened to the slaughter, Mohammed and his "sole companion" fled into the darkness.

[1] "Say, I have my religion, you your religion."
*Koran.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FLIGHT AND AFTER

622–26 A.D. 1–5 A.H.

MOHAMMED and Abu Bekr reached Medina in safety, and the first appearance of the Prophet on the outskirts of the city was a signal for a wonderful display of affection and loyalty. Mohammed had reached not only a haven, but what was practically a kingdom ; and in the hour of triumph he became a changed man—still kindly, it is true, to those about him, still a wise diplomatist, still a faithful friend ; but to enemies, dissentients, and sceptics a rigorous and implacable tyrant.

The certainty of his mission passed imperceptibly from a supposed and occasional inspiration to something approaching a permanent obsession or a chronic monomania. If force was to his hand, the voice of God bid him use it ; if lust inflamed him, it was to be gratified ; if his enemies fell into his hands, Heaven commanded him to slay them ; if men opposed him, he cursed them by divine mandate. In fact, he had ceased to distinguish between conscience and desire ; both became inextricably mixed, and discrimination died in his breast. Here I suggest that we may not judge this man ; on the only occasion on which we know for certain that he fell willingly, he retracted with courage and truth. It is obvious that he had about him nothing of the nature of a charlatan ; but his personal bias became more and more overwhelming, and from imagining himself the occasional mouthpiece of his Maker, he drifted to the conclusion that he was a living embodiment of the law and that he could do no wrong. That a man of flesh and blood labouring under such delusions did no worse and committed no more fearful crimes than did Mohammed, should be the wonder of the world.

In the building of his religion Mohammed maintained an unwavering simplicity which has remained almost unaltered to this present time. A purification, five daily prayers, a few lectures, a weekly congregation with a brief sermon, and an annual fast, were and are the outward and visible signs of Islam. This simple ritual has, I think, a considerable and undeniable value. The true lesson which the Moslem formula inculcates is the equality of man before God; in silence and unity, rich and poor, felon and saint, stand, kneel and bow on the level floor of the Mosque, without precedence or place.

The Moslems were not long content to rest still in Medina. The refugees were only biding their time, and soon little marauding parties began to steal out to waylay the caravans of the Koraysh. The first was a failure, as indeed are nine out of ten plundering expeditions among the Arabs; but a little later a second *ghazu*[1] sallied forth. This time they got within striking distance; but whether the Koraysh were on the alert or too numerous, or the day was too warm or too cold, in the end Obeida, the leader of the Moslems, returned to Medina with unfilled saddle bags.

At last, however, the storm broke. It was in the sacred month of Rajab, when by the ancient desert custom[2] all hostility should cease, that Abdallah and six Moslems found themselves by the Prophet's order concealed in the valley of Nakhla awaiting the caravans of the Koraysh. A party of four of the enemy approached with a convoy, and the marauders deliberated among themselves as to whether they should break the sacred peace. They had no warrant from their master to do so, but the prey was at hand and easily obtainable, and the temptation was strong. One of the Moslems decided the matter by letting fly an arrow. It struck home, and Amr-ibn-al-Hadrami of the Koraysh lay dead; two of the remaining Meccans were surrounded, while the third vaulted on his horse and escaped. To us, this seems a trivial affair, but it was a matter of the greatest moment. After a year's war a single man had actually met with a violent death; blood had been shed and under discreditable circumstances; all Mecca would ring with this, and vengeance would be exacted—Abdallah must have felt that he had outrun his

[1] Marauding party. [2] Now abrogated.

commission as he hastily gathered the captured camels and hurried back to Medina.

Mohammed was not well pleased with Abdallah's breach of custom, for it was now a real war in which he was engaged. He knew that sooner or later the Meccans would exact more than a mere blood fine for the death of Amr, and as yet, his following, save for a few devoted souls, were not prepared to meet death for his cause. Rage and anger were on the side of the Meccans, the weighing of chances and the spirit of compromise rife among the Moslems at Medina. But the moment was not one for going back. Mohammed had set his hand to the plough, and now, whether he wished it or no, he was unable to retreat. Accordingly he decided to attack the next Meccan caravan of importance which should put in an appearance on its homeward journey.

It was on the famous field of Badr that Mohammed and three hundred odd Moslems found themselves towards evening in the proximity of the Meccan army, the latter of the incredible strength of seven hundred fighting men. Prompted by desert instinct, Mohammed seized the nearest wells and undismayed made battle a certainty. At a crisis Mohammed had no fears. In moments of calm deliberation he could think and plan; but when all was on the hazard he recked little that he did, the full force of his conviction surged up in his mind, ardent prayers fell from his lips, determination entered like iron into his soul. The night before Badr he fired a new lamp in the Arabian mind, he filled his men with enthusiasm for a cause; so that while the Koraysh argued and quarrelled, the Moslems slept in peace. Morning dawned, and with it came war; the leaders challenged and gave battle to each other in duels; Mohammed prayed and watched like one wrapt in ecstasy—"Victory, O Lord—Victory! Paradise for the Believer who dies—Glory for the Believer who lives—death and hell fire for the idolaters." The Koraysh fought as Arabs fight, bravely and chivalrously, but with no hunger for victory. The Moslems were enthralled and struggled with wild desperation for one particular end, the conquest of the unbelievers. Such a force the Koraysh could not withstand; they lost heart, the Moslems charged in mad fury. Mohammed, now blind to all material things, saw

Gabriel and his Angels wheeling around him ; he clawed gravel in his hands and hurled it towards the foe. The Moslems charged with redoubled vigour ; the Koraysh broke and fled ; the battle of Badr had been won.

Forty-nine of the Koraysh lay dead upon the ground, and fourteen Moslems had gone to Paradise. Is it credible that this absurd little skirmish was one of the decisive battles of history? Yet it was more important to the world than any that had taken place since Cleopatra sailed away from Actium.

When the shouting and dust of strife had subsided it was found that fifty prisoners were in the hands of the conquerors. Three of these were slain the moment the battle was ended, two by command, and one in anger. The commission of Mohammed was now to strike, and the chivalry and unwritten laws of his people no longer bound him. Two days later another prisoner was condemned. Astounded at the cruelty of his sentence, the man begged for some reason for its infliction. "Because of thine enmity to God and His Prophet," came the unhesitating answer. "My child, who will tend her?" gasped the miserable wretch. "Hell fire," was the harsh reply. It was no longer the war of the desert, it was the war of ideas—the merry unthinking paganism against the hard unyielding truth; and paganism always crumbles before the Koran, for the Koran was written to that end.

The remainder of the prisoners were spared and eventually ransomed, but the fierce fire of conviction remained imprinted in the hearts of the Moslems. If man or woman mocked God or His Prophet, that man or woman died—there was no mercy for the scoffer or the unbeliever who endeavoured to check the propagation of the new faith. The Jews, who at first perhaps imagined that Mohammed was that unthinkable thing a proselyte, now perceiving that he had no consideration for their nation but only for their God, hated him, and having at first temporised now reviled him.

After Mohammed returned from Badr in triumph there was something akin to a reign of terror in Medina. Mohammed knew full well the fickle nature of the Arabs, and he had plumbed the depths of the scornful hatred of the Jews. Each scoffer met his fate by the swift and silent hand of the assassin.

The converts of the Prophet applauded these dark deeds ; the unbelievers trembled and held their peace ; the Jews muttered in suppressed indignation. At last a section of the Israelites broke out in open rebellion; but punishment came quickly. They were besieged in their quarter, conquered, forcibly exiled, and their wealth distributed among the faithful.

A year rolled on its course, during which time the raids and counter-raids continued as before. Medina and Mecca carried on their desultory warfare, and the desert tribes backed now one side and now another. The victory of Badr had not convinced the canny Bedawin that the prophet of God was yet assured of ultimate success, and they temporised with him in a manner exasperating enough to have driven a less sanguine man to madness. Meanwhile the anger and rage of the defeated Meccans had increased. Mohammed, the traitor to the Ka'ba, had routed them and disgraced them, and their women mocked them with shrill taunts as only Arab women can. The warriors plucked their beards in anger; they undertook raids against Medina and were sometimes successful ; but no paltry snatching of camels and merchandise could compensate for the open shame which they had suffered at Badr.

After a long series of discussions and negotiations they decided upon an assault on Medina, and an expedition of revenge and retaliation was undertaken. The Meccans collected an array some 3,000 in number, composed of footmen, horsemen, and camelmen. This force, which for Arabia is imposing, marched unopposed to the outskirts of Medina and camped in the cultivated fields of the citizens. A sudden qualm overcame the Prophet, who appeared doubtful and nervous; and the men of Medina grew irritable and critical. The Moslems seemed to lack confidence. As spies reported the forces of the enemy to be overwhelming, the wisest heads proposed holding the city; Mohammed concurred, but the bolder young lances scoffed at the idea. In the confusion of debate Mohammed yielded to their importunities, and decided to sally forth and give battle to the idolaters.

This was a perilous moment for Islam. The disaffected Jews offered to act as allies of the Prophet; but knowing that treachery breeds treachery, he ordered them off the field. Then those who were friends of the Jews refused to fight without

them and turned off and went home, leaving Mohammed with only seven hundred followers to contend with a force four times as great. According to custom the battle commenced with individual combats, in which the champions of the Moslems were successful. The Mecca women sang shrill defiance; but the mighty arms of the heroes of the faith, Ali and Hamza, were not to be withstood, and the stout warriors of Mecca were hewn in pieces. The idolaters wavered, the Moslems charged, the battle was almost won, the Prophet cried aloud with joy. Badr was going to be repeated; but Mohammed reckoned without taking one man into account.

This was Khalid the son of Walid—a man of courage, craft, and guile—a true soldier of the desert. He cared little perhaps for Meccan gods and less for Meccan shame; but he had engaged to lead a band of the wildlings of the waste on the side of the Ka'ba. Khalid-ibn-Walid was one who had the instinct of battle and also a gift which, for a soldier, is a gift from heaven—a capacity to lead. Had another man bidden the Bedawi allies of the Meccans charge the successful Moslems, the command might have met with mocking answers. "The Meccans fly, why should we sweat for these shameless townsmen?" would have been on the lips of the horsemen watching the issue of the fight. But when Khalid spoke, his words became the wishes of his followers. Like an arrow from a bow, a clump of scurrying horsemen drove madly out of the desert, right into the rear of the charging Moslems, overturning saint and hypocrite, waverers and martyrs, casting all into the wildest confusion.

The Bedawin charged with Khalid at their head, and the battle of Ohod was lost. The pursuit was checked, the plunder was dropped, and the Moslems in their dismay forgot the Prophet and his Paradise. The valiant Hamza was pinned to the earth with a lance; heroes and disciples were slain with grievous slaughter. The Meccans took heart, and returned once more to the field whence they had fled. Wild with anguish, Mohammed implored the Moslems to stand firm. "I am the apostle of God," he thundered; but when Arabs are on the run, truly the flaming sword of Gabriel will not turn them back. A well-aimed stone struck the Prophet in the mouth, a smashing

blow from a mace stunned him and felled him to the earth. "Mohammed is slain," went up the cry on all hands. The Moslems fled with redoubled rapidity. A few faithful friends dragged his senseless body from the field, and the conquering Meccans stopped the pursuit to resume their quarrels and arguments.

That it is difficult to keep Arabs together in the hour of victory is comprehensible, but that it should be possible to keep them united in the hour of disaster is hardly credible, and yet Mohammed achieved it. While the women of Mecca were wailing and shrieking, while the Jews were mocking and jeering, while the waverers were discussing the propriety of giving him up to the Meccans, while he himself was weary in mind and body, with the wounds he had received and the defeat he had undergone, not for one moment was he despondent. The *suras* of the Koran which are attributed to this period excel nearly all the others in majesty and sublime confidence. In them Mohammed lays stress on the fact that he is but human, that he will die, that he might have been killed; but he affirms with greater certainty than ever that victory is at hand and that the truth is undying. So great a sway had he obtained over himself and his actual followers, that, although he was an Arab and they were Arabs, hardly twenty-four hours had elapsed after the defeat of Ohod before he sallied forth at the head of his men to pursue the conquerors. This movement had no material result, save that it demonstrated to the world that even Arabs could at the risk of personal sacrifice be rendered loyal and united to a leader or a cause—a wonderful thing, which perhaps had never been seen before.

After the disaster of Ohod another year of raids, assassinations, and skirmishes passed without producing any great event save the exile of some of the remaining Jews of Medina. On the first anniversary of his reverse Mohammed marched out from Badr there to meet the Meccans by appointment. That the ultimate success of Mohammed was now a matter of less uncertainty than before, is indicated by the result of this expedition. In spite of failure and disaster Mohammed was able to marshal a force of 1,500[1] true believers, prepared to fight for his cause.

[1] A greater number than had ever followed him before.

Abu Sofian of Mecca, although the victor of the previous year, could not collect an army at all and failed to keep the tryst he had made in his hour of triumph. For eight days the Moslems stood on the undisputed field of Badr, its unchallenged masters. Then they returned once more to Medina, having acquired without loss or expense a victory of a moral kind which was worth a hundred battles. Ohod was forgotten, and the shame was transferred once more from the shoulders of the Moslems to those of the men of Mecca. The news must have passed from tent to tent in the desert, from village to village on the coast, that the masters of the Ka'ba were fearful and that the followers of the apostle of God were bold. It would be of a part with the unbelieving nature of the Arabs to deduce that this courage was due to conviction and that that conviction was one of truth.

After this great moral success Mohammed was in a position to prosecute a policy wherein his genius enabled him to excel. This took the form of a steady and unceasing canvass and impressment of the surrounding nomadic tribes. Those who were not allies or believers he alternately harassed and cajoled; those who were friendly he consolidated into believers; those who rejected his overtures he plundered and scattered. The brawls which arose occasionally amid his council he stifled by reprimanding the noisy chieftains in the name of Heaven and cursing those who fought in the cause of God for private ends; the quarrels of his more obscure followers he silenced by distracting their attention in arduous campaigns and lengthy marches. As the months passed on the power of Mohammed grew in the land, his expeditions were seen on the Syrian border, the fame of his belief was spread through the desert, and the noise of his exploits reached even to Yemen. He was not supreme in Arabia, but his power was steadily gaining ground; observing this, the Koraysh grew more and more afraid, and the Jews who had taken refuge in Mecca fanned their fears with revengeful pleasure.

The season of strife came round, and with it first mutterings of war. The Meccans felt that if matters continued at their present rate all would soon be lost, and that it was imperative that something should be done to check the rising tide of Islam.

Abu Sofian, the chieftain of Mecca, decided to make one grand attempt to decide the matter for ever. He appealed to the Koraysh on the score of the danger to the Ka'ba, the ancient feud, the increasing power of their implacable foe, and with such success that no fewer than 4,000 men decided to accompany him to attack Medina. The Bedawin who had fled from Mohammed were enlisted by similar means; the southern tribes, hitherto neutral, he persuaded to join his force, probably on the promise of certain victory and of plunder which would otherwise be beyond their reach.

By these methods Abu Sofian collected an army[1] of no fewer than 10,000 horsemen, footmen, and camel riders. The loquacity, the going to and fro, the arguments, the councils, the betrayals, the gossipings, the persuadings, the bargainings, by which the final congregation of this array was accomplished naturally prevented any attempt at secrecy of the object and destination of the Meccan expedition. Mohammed must have had ample notice of their intention and movements; and the men of Medina, the refugees, and the Prophet were probably awed by the magnitude of the force marching against them. Never probably for ages had so large a fighting power been united in Arabia for purposes of intertribal war.

Mohammed, however, was equal to the occasion, and he doubtless felt that if this period could be but tided over, his final success was assured. His method of extricating himself from the difficulty was peculiar. A Christian from northern Mesopotamia suggested to his mind the idea of entrenching the city behind a ditch and a bank. Simple as this expedient is, it had never as yet occurred to the minds of the city dwellers of Arabia.[2] Mohammed, however, had no objection to departing from the customs of his fathers, and Abu Sofian and his followers were pained and disappointed to discover that instead of standing out in the open to indulge in the amusement of battle, the Moslems were arranged in disciplined order to repel any attack on the city.

[1] The word is misleading, but I can think of no other. Gang is too small, horde too terrible, mass too untruthful, procession too ridiculous, rabble too contemptuous.

[2] This in itself is a strange instance of the Arabian character. Their war songs and battle poetry would be a credit to the highest civilisation for humanity, nobility, sentiment, and expression; their weapons, a disgrace to bushmen.

The Bedawin cried out in anger that the trench was an unworthy trick. Abu Sofian had the greatest difficulty in making his army keep the field. Once, indeed, a knot of horsemen condescended to scamper over the works and back again, and once the archers were induced to discharge their arrows at the ignoble defenders; but the whole affair lacked spirit and *éclat*. To have come so far to such a dismal and tedious entertainment as a siege was contrary to all preconceived ideas. The only stratagem left to the Meccans was to tamper with the remaining unbelievers in the ranks of the besieged.

A tribe of Jews, the Coreitza, still remained in a castle within three miles of Medina. Abu Sofian discovered that they were ready to accept him as a deliverer; but if there were friends of Abu Sofian in Medina Mohammed knew it, and perhaps Abu Sofian did not know how many friends of Mohammed slept in his encampments. Mohammed caused the Jews of the Coreitza to suspect the Meccans, and also sowed distrust in the heart of Abu Sofian with regard to the Coreitza. This result was achieved by a veritable masterpiece of diplomacy, such as must rank high even in Arabian annals, for Mohammed had secured the co-operation of the very men whom Abu Sofian was using to negotiate with the treacherous Jews. The rains began to fall, the tents of the besiegers grew moist and dismal, the cooking fires were extinguished, the great ditch and mound seemed to appear more exasperating and the Moslems more pestilently vigilant. The leaders of the invading army, never sufficiently united to remain together except on condition that each one was commander-in-chief for a day in turn, now began to quarrel and insult one another. Abu Sofian accepted a fiasco as the least evil that could now overtake him, and not twenty days after his arrival leaped on his camel and gave orders for a general dispersion.

The Bedawin drew off into the desert, and the Koraysh turned their faces towards Mecca. Mohammed had no thought of pursuit,[1] but he decided that never again should his cause be endangered by treachery at home. The Coreitza must be made to pay the full penalty of their wickedness; by the decree of God Medina and Islam had been saved, but had their treachery

[1] "When the Bedawi flies from you, beware!" is an old desert maxim.

been successful Mohammed and his creed would have been obliterated. This is the thought which must have filled his passionate heart with sublime rage. The feeling of personal injury, mingled with a sense of the blasphemous nature of their betrayal; the realisation that all he had undertaken, all the pains he had endured, all the sacrifices he had made would have been rendered futile; the thought that the cause of God would have been defeated, that the world would once more have been plunged in ignorance—these feelings are sufficiently terrible to arouse a fire of indignation in the coldest breast; and Mohammed was not a man of a cold nature. He had seen how disaffection spread in the ranks of his supporters through the machinations of the Coreitza, how nearly they had imperilled the success of his mission; and the fierce passages upbraiding the stiff-necked people surged up in his mind. Even as they had endeavoured [1] to compass the death of Isa, even as they had scorned the breath of God in earlier days, so now they scorned God's apostle, and had endeavoured to betray him into the hands of the idolaters. Accordingly, without waiting to rest after the fatigues of the defence of the fosse, Mohammed called on the Moslems to follow him in quest of vengeance.

The Coreitza were closely besieged in their castle, and surrendered without asking or hoping for mercy. The women and children were sold into captivity, and the men, perhaps 900 in number, were given a brief trial. Sa'd, a chief of Medina sorely wounded in battle, was chosen as judge. Nearly at the point of death, he was carried to the spot where the Jewish prisoners were assembled. The people of Medina urged mercy; the Jews knelt bound in rows—silent, submissive, yet unafraid. Sa'd paused, and then with almost his last breath condemned the unhappy wretches to death. Mohammed, who at times could be kindly and gentle, was now merciless and inexorable. A single man was spared in that he was innocent of the crime; but the remainder were beheaded, company by company, until not one remained. If there had been waverers before in Medina, they had no place there now. By bravery, by oratory, by argument and now by bloodshed Mohammed had at last accomplished unity.

[1] Mohammed thought the crucifixion was a divinely achieved delusion of the Jews.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE BUILDING OF ISLAM

627–29 A.D. 6–8 A.H.

NOW that Mohammed had practically achieved his desire, it is not unprofitable to examine the character of the Prophet, as it had formed or transformed itself under the stress of active strife and success.

It is distinctly remarkable that as Mohammed progressed towards his appointed goal he grew less prophetic as he grew more practical, and less mystical as he grew more active. The saint and the contemplative divine began to merge insensibly into the ruler and man of action, and as he became more engrossed in the means and methods of propagating what he deemed the truth, so in proportion did the nature of the truth seem to grow more hazy in his eyes. What seemed to him to be obviously wrong he crushed with a firm hand; usury, drunkenness, treachery, and unbrotherliness, he smote hip and thigh; charity in goods, honesty in dealing, valour in war, simplicity in manners, kindness to brutes, he enforced with the utmost strength; but save for the imparting of the knowledge of the existence of one all-just and all-seeing God, his prophetic mission dwindled away to nothing. He laid the foundations of a mighty edifice, but seems to have lost the knowledge he had once had of the building he was about to construct. To-day Islam is even as Mohammed left it, a kind of crypt without an edifice to support. In the religion of Mohammed you have every necessary foundation for the support of a new world, but no plan, no idea as to what the form of that world should be.

It would appear that this sudden and apparently infinite hiatus was brought about by women. So long as the elderly and

pious Khadijah lived to encourage the wondrous and beauteous thoughts of her husband, so long did the strong yet impressionable mind of Mohammed remain pure, unsullied, and sublime; but when this source of inspiration was withdrawn and replaced by the companionship of wives whose only idea was to maintain his allegiance by gratifying his passions and enthralling his affection, a rapid deterioration in his spiritual qualities immediately became noticeable. Mohammed's marriage with Khadijah was a wedding of two souls; and we may be permitted to imagine that Khadijah's was the stronger. When Khadijah died Mohammed evidently found only bodily and worldly gratification in his frequent nuptials; and it was for that reason that they were frequent, because he was ever vainly seeking for that peaceful companionship of the mind which subsists within the bonds of a perfect marriage, and finding in return only the wearisome yet turbulent satiety of the flesh.

Mohammed found no peace in four marriages, and Christian critics are scandalised that he should have made an exceptional law for himself by exceeding the customary limit. It is, however, unfair to judge the founder of Islam over hardly on this ground. He is blamed for exceeding a law already more than lax; and this view is, I think, incorrect. A Moslem may marry four wives, but he may cohabit with an indefinite number of slaves; so that by Arab standards he is never limited to a fixed number of women.

That Mohammed should have accepted polygamy as an institution, in the first instance, was an unparalleled disaster for the world; but even here it is difficult in Christian charity to blame him, for he was bound by custom, tradition, and Judaism to accept polygamy as legal. His only business on this head was, he imagined, to codify and regulate the existing laws, his main office being to uproot Paganism and preach the Truth. Paganism indeed he uprooted, but there was very little that he set up in its place.

We now enter upon the sixth year of the Flight from Mecca, which we may take as the first year of active rule and success. Hitherto Mohammed had always laboured under the contingency of ultimate defeat and final obliteration by the Meccans; but the break-up of the besieging army outside the fosse had

heralded the beginning of a new era. There could be no doubt now that in Arabia, at least, Mohammedanism was a permanent force. Outwardly, there was not indeed much change in the general trend of events. Raiding parties came and went; robbers and brigands were slain and their bands dispersed; prayers, regular and fervent, were raised in the Mosque at Medina; Bedawi tribes began to make allegiance to the Prophet more readily; while Abu Sofian and his unbelievers continued to threaten with fearful threats. But Mohammed had in reality won, and his victory soon began to bear fruit.

The snarling and growling at Mecca led to little action, but the Prophet began to think of peace. All idolaters would doubtless roast and sweat in hell-fire; but still a temporary arrangement might be made during this earthly interlude. The voice of the Ka'ba grew loud and insistent—the pilgrimage was a duty incumbent on all Moslems and not to be shirked. Mohammed's sleep grew troubled at nights; and presently a vision came to him of himself leading his people to the holy places in peace. The sacred month when war was unlawful approached, and when it arrived Mohammed and 1,500 pilgrims started to perform their duty at the shrine.

The caravan set out upon the road and the noise of its departure was bruited abroad. In Mecca the news caused consternation and rage. True, it was the sacred month; true, battle was illegal; but who could trust the word of a madman and his rabble? The Koraysh stood to arms and marched out to oppose the entrance of the pilgrimage. Khalid and his horsemen scoured the desert to give notice of its approach. Mohammed, however, was in no fighting mood; by a détour he avoided the scouts of the Bedawin and halted his people at Hudeibia, where there was a well, on the frontier of the sacred territory of Mecca. There, as the Prophet lay encamped, came to him the inevitable go-betweens and ambassadors. The Bedawi Shaykh who was told to tell him to go home was sent to the right about. The Arab who was to inform him that he came on a bootless errand was abruptly dismissed. The messenger who announced that both Mohammed and his pilgrims would be slain was ordered away; but at last the envoy who was commissioned to discuss the situation obtained a hear-

ing. Then began the weary negotiations for a treaty of peace. The historians give us few details ; but any one who has spent a profitable hour in an Arab bazaar or a Bedawi encampment may figure to himself the roaring, swearing, refusing, cajoling, handslapping, haggling, oath-taking, letting go and taking up again which must have been gone through before the following treaty received the seals of the chiefs of Islam and the guardians of the Meccan shrine :

"In Thy name, O God! These are the conditions of peace between Mohammed the son of Abdallah, and Soheil the son of Amr.

"War shall be suspended for ten years. Neither side shall attack the other. Perfect amity shall prevail betwixt us. Whosoever wisheth to join Mohammed and enter into treaty with him shall have liberty to do so ; and whoever wisheth to join the Koraysh and enter into treaty with them shall have liberty so to do. If any one goeth over to Mohammed without the permission of his guardian, he shall be sent back to his guardian. But if any one from amongst the followers of Mohammed return to the Koraysh, the same shall not be sent back. Provided—on the part of the Koraysh—that Mohammed and his followers retire from us this year without entering our city. In the coming year, Mohammed may visit Mecca, he and his followers, for three days, when we shall retire therefrom. But they may not enter it with any weapons, save those of the traveller, namely, to each a sheathed sword."

Mohammed styled the accomplishment of the treaty with the Meccans a victory, and well indeed he might. He had paralysed the most serious combination against him, and now he had prevented its ever becoming formidable again. To pagan and believer Mohammed had now a recognised position in Arabia ; and once a man has a recognised position among Arabs and no longer depends entirely on his own efforts for success, he has achieved a lasting victory which will bear him up through a perfect avalanche of adversity. Mohammed no longer implored with passion, or upbraided with bitterness, or threatened with supernatural punishment. He now began to command with confidence, and to chastise indiscipline with active regulations. But the mystic was still strong with him, and the events of

the day began to find their reflection in his musings and dreams.

Soon the nature of his victory in Arabia suggested to him that the area of his success need not be limited by that land, nor by the tongue of the Arabs. The wave of faith and belief which seemed to have been ebbing for so long, and which appeared to have been ousted from his mind by the consideration of worldly affairs, now surged back with redoubled strength. I think there is no more magnificent moment in Mohammed's career than when he set himself to call upon the kings and rulers of the world to accept not his ruler-ship, but his faith. North, south, east, and west rode his messengers, calling upon the princes and lords of the earth to acknowledge the oneness of the one true and only God.

What can have been the comments of those who received this strange admonition? It probably reached Heraclius while he was busy in Syria re-ordering and re-settling the ruined and distracted province. Amid such surroundings he cannot have delayed long to consider the meaning or the object of the writer. We can see him perhaps pausing for a moment amidst a heap of despatches and reports which he is checking, or during the interval betwixt two audiences, to listen to the words of the interpreter who translates the summons from Arabia. Amidst the jumble of words there is but little that is distinct, and the Emperor perhaps dismisses the matter from his mind, not to think of it again for many a long day. Harith, the Bedawi border-lord of the Ghassanids, also received the message, and scenting a profitable little war in the summons, asked permission to smite the Moslems; but the matter came to nothing.

The Christian king of Abyssinia, who had given Moslems a place of refuge in the hour of distress, received the command in a manner which is best described as of a negative-affirmative kind, and with this Mohammed seemed satisfied and accepted of him several offers of friendship and goodwill—to wit, a marriage with the widow Umm Habiba, a daughter of Abu Sofian who had fled to Abyssinia with her husband, and ships for the remaining refugees to return in to Arabia.

The governor of Egypt, Makukas, was also approached. He had doubtless heard not a little of the prowess of the Moslems,

and knew full well the ease with which Bedawi horsemen could harass his province from the Sinai peninsula; and no Roman governor at that time had any particular desire to embroil himself in hostilities with a capable but unplunderable enemy. Makukas answered the missive with abject and honeyed words, and judging his man with some accuracy, despatched to Mohammed two beautiful Coptic girls, and what was perhaps an even greater mark of esteem, a magnificent white mule and a robe of honour.

In Ctesiphon the notice was received with less cordiality. When the Ambassadors appeared before Kavadh, the King of Kings, he received them not with the nonchalance of Heraclius, nor the friendly aloofness of the Abyssinian, nor the suave diplomacy of the Egyptian. Wrath, contempt, and rage were the passions which surged in the breast of the Persian tyrant. Persia had been humbled to the dust, her armies scattered and rendered impotent, her treasures filched from her, her plundered trophies yielded up, her princes killed, her palaces ruined; but still she was the Persia of old, luxurious, poetic, refined and polite. Her religion dated back to dim antiquity; her clergy prided themselves on their purity and philosophy; her troops were still to be numbered by thousands; her princes still of ancient lineage and fiercely proud of their birth. It was therefore more than could be borne by the son of Khosrau the conqueror, that he should be addressed in tones of command by a rugged, lean-shanked, wizened-faced, illiterate, tent-dwelling desert thief, and ordered to accept a lecherous old poet who kinged it in a mud Brentford as the prophet of a God of sand and camel-dung. In fury he tore up the letter and hurled the fragments in the Ambassador's face. The Bedawi messengers returned to Mecca with news of the insulting answer of the King of Kings. The Prophet's wrath was kindled. "Even thus, O Lord," he cried, "rend Thou his kingdom from him."

The prayer of Mohammed and the anger of Kavadh were, perhaps, both inspired by a single event; for shortly before the embassy of Mohammed reached Irak, the governor of Yemen had thrown off his allegiance to the Persians, and in assuming his independence had along with the majority of his people accepted the Moslem faith.

But Mohammed, while he indulged in his glorious visions of the future, did not neglect to attend to the minor details involved in the consolidation of his power; and though he had sufficient enthusiasm to warrant his despatching emissaries to the four quarters of the globe, commanding submission to his revelation, he did not fail to lead an army against the scornful Jews who dwelt in the rich valleys of Kheybar, some three days' march north of Medina.

The Jews were ever a thorn in the side of Mohammed, and they alone in Arabia hated him with good cause and reason. Mohammed must have ever disliked the Jews because of their assumption of superior learning, and because they owned scriptures which he could not read. Their stubbornness must have rankled in his heart. All the ignorant and blind could perceive and appreciate his truthfulness; the Jews alone rejected his mission with scorn when they should have been the first to accept it. The Kings of the world could wait awhile; but for the Jews who mocked him for a madman and a false prophet Mohammed could not wait. The chief man of Kheybar, an intriguer of the fosse, was slain by a band of midnight assassins, and presently the Moslems sallied forth to attack the settlement. The Jews stood out to guard their fastness; but hope had departed from their breasts. It was not Mohammed, the refugee, but Mohammed, the greatest man in Arabia, Mohammed with 300 not thirty horsemen, Mohammed the maker of the truce with Mecca, who was marching up against them. The Jews fought stubbornly, but did little to impede the progress of the attack; and at last the chief fortress of the colony yielded itself up. The Jews were allowed to depart if they would yield up their gold; they accepted the terms, but two of their chiefs who concealed their wealth were discovered in their treachery and slain with slaughter as grievous as that with which their forbears slew the men of Canaan. Mohammed viewed the wives of the slaughtered chiefs, and Safiyya pleased him. That night she became his bride; but Nemesis stood near at hand with sudden punishment in readiness.

Zeinab, a Jewess whose husband, father, and brother had fallen in the battle, was inspired with the courage of another Judith. With smiling face she prepared a feast for the Arab chieftains.

Mohammed and his Shaykhs sat around the steaming meat bowl, stretching out their hands to tear the soft flesh of the young kid. Suddenly the Prophet cried: "Hold, the food is poisoned." Bishr, who sat beside him, stiffened and fell motionless. All was in confusion; Zeinab was seized, and confessed her deed without fear or shame. Some say she was slain, others that she was pardoned; but she had struck a heavy blow at Mohammed's constitution. He writhed in pain, threw up the poison, and partly recovered; but physically he was never the same man again.[1]

Presently the season of pilgrimage came round once more, and by right of treaty Mohammed set out to accomplish his duty to the Ka'ba. The Koraysh were powerless to stop him, the written bond held them fast, and with inward raging of heart they withdrew from the city, in order that their hated enemy might enter and pray beside the Ka'ba. Mohammed approached his native town with 2,000 followers. A party was detached to watch, as a precaution against treachery, and the Prophet and his men proceeded to the temple. Within the sight of the grinning statues of the false gods and idols, the Moslems performed the rites of pilgrimage; and as the sun rose to the meridian, one named Bilal mounted the roof, and for the first time the quavering call to prayer echoed through the Meccan streets.

By the time the days of pilgrimage were ended, Mohammed had contracted a fresh alliance and was affianced to a Meccan widow. It was not love or any tender passion which prompted him; he was working to an end, and the influence of the aged Meimuna (she was fully fifty) might be of use to him. He asked the Koraysh if he might tarry a day to celebrate the wedding; but they bade him be gone, and swiftly at that. By this discourtesy they irritated the relations of Meimuna, and thus played into the hands of Mohammed, who was able to give a more than cordial reception to Khalid-ibn-Walid, when the latter, accompanied by Amr and Othman-ibn-Talha, came to give his adhesion to the new faith on the score of relationship to Meimuna, whose nephew Khalid was.

This diplomatic dexterity practically ended the Meccan question. The Koraysh were busily quarrelling among them-

[1] For many a long day he suffered and pined, at times imagining himself bewitched, at others growing surly, mournful, and depressed.

selves concerning old grievances and new blunders; while Khalid, Othman and Amr, the three chief men in the holy city, had deserted idolatry for the camp of the one true God. The pilgrimage to Mecca was only, as it were, a breathing space in the continued round of warlike propaganda which was being disseminated from Mecca, and tribe after tribe of the Bedawin yielded to persuasion or force. A vague feeling of unity, and a seemingly fortuitous concurrence of opinion, began to exert a force of life and movement on the tribes of Arabia. The glow was hazy and indefinite, nothing was clear or distinct; but things were no longer as they had been, the age was pregnant with matters both new and strange: the idea of the Ka'ba, the tradition of Abraham, the echo of the Voice of the Son of Man had mingled into an indefinable substance, and a new element had been evolved therefrom. Defeat and disaster mattered but little now: the foundations were firm and solid.

The Ghassanid Arabs near Bostra must have felt dimly that a power was rising with which they could not cope alone. A messenger from Medina was murdered, and a war of battle and death, not of plunder and flight, was proclaimed against the Moslems. The warrior missioners of Islam set out to avenge the crime; but at Muta they met, not the border Arabs, whose blood they desired, but the disciplined legions of the Emperor. With the temerity of belief, the desert men ventured not only to attack the Romans on their own ground, but without feint, stratagem, or surprise. The unshakable infantry were suffered to draw up in array, to await the attack, to discharge their arrows without haste, to advance in order over known ground, to manœuvre, stand firm, retreat, or go forward unharassed, unambushed, and unbetrayed. It is not decreed that the men of the Prophet, the book and the sword, shall defeat the men of the Cross under such conditions. The Moslems attacked, seeking martyrdom as an end and victory as an incident. The leaders cheerfully hamstrung their horses and accepted death with the embrace of a lover. The heroes died in happiness; the craven, the faithless and the wise fled back to the desert.

Khalid, the Sword of God and convert of Mecca, had more wit than religion. He saw that the day was lost. His superiors had fallen under the swords of Christians. With a firm hand he allayed panic, shepherded the beaten army, covered its rear,

staved off the pursuit, and at last presented to the Prophet an army beaten, driven back, shattered, but still in being. Amid the cries of wrath of the crowd who had hoped to see plunder-laden victors, the shrieks of the dust-dabbled women who would see their men no more, the whimpering of the wondering children who were told they were orphans, Khalid rode in with the discomfited troops he had saved for a future victory. The hacked chain-mail hung in tatters on the shoulders of the wearied infantry; their arms trailed on the road, rusty and unburnished; some hung on the girths of the sweat-caked, jaded horses of the Bedawin, who had saved their headlong flight.

Mohammed, though stricken to the heart with grief for the loss of his dearest friends who had fallen in the forefront of the battle, was undismayed. He saw beyond the accident of the hour, and silencing the revilings of the people, told them that if Allah willed, these troops would once more return to the battle. Eager to avenge the death of his faithful followers, and equally anxious to prove the worth of his converts, he despatched Amr and 300 men to raid the lands of the north. Amr found great hosts gathered to oppose him, but neither legions nor disciplined troops. With seasonable caution he sent back for reinforcements, which were promptly despatched under Abu Obeyda-ibn-al-Jarrah; but when these reached the Meccan chief there instantly broke out the usual bickerings regarding the supremacy of command, Amr asserting that the Prophet had entrusted him with the sole leadership, while Abu Obeyda held that the charge was committed to him. At other times the two chiefs would have quarrelled and one would have deserted; but Ibn-al-Jarrah remembered that Mohammed had forbidden any discussion concerning the division of authority, and yielded to Amr.

This was a new spirit in border warfare. Discipline, obedience, and submission were totally alien to the minds of the people of the Peninsula, but they now appeared as the handmaids of Islam. The Arabs of the north broke peacefully before the united front of the Moslems. Thousands of nominal Christians came over to the ranks of the invaders, and the remainder fled in dismay. Amr retired, laden with booty, undisputed conqueror. The Christian confederation of the Syrian border had dissolved even more easily than the confederation of Mecca.

# CHAPTER X

## THE FINAL TRIUMPH

629–32 A.D. 8–11 A.H.

WHEN last we saw the Koraysh they were beginning to perceive the disastrous nature of the treaty they had made; and now that the truce was drawing to a close they noticed with fear that the power of Medina had waxed strong and mighty, while theirs had declined year by year. The Bedawin no longer came to them for alliance, bribes, advice, and help. All went to the Prophet; every day exhibited the impotence and insignificance of Mecca, hitherto a ruling city; and every post brought in news of the further spread of the religion of the man she had cast forth.

Matters went from bad to worse; the dogmas of Islam were accepted by Bedawin who actually pastured within a few hours of the town; the hand of Allah weighed on all Arabia, and Lat, Ozza, and Manat, and the other tribal Gods were neglected and half forgotten. Impotent, furious, galled beyond all bearing, the Koraysh gave vent to their spleen by a signal act of useless and wanton treachery.[1] The tribe of the Bani Khozaa, which dwelt in the valleys near Mecca, had accepted Islam; one night a band of the Koraysh stole into one of their camps, murdered some sleeping men, and slunk back to the city.

A few days later Medina was roused to fury by the news of this dastardly act; a few days later still, the men of Mecca and the Koraysh trembled at the tidings of a general assembly of the Bedawin. The villagers, the greater and the lesser tribes,

[1] Such conduct is characteristic of the Arab when stung to irritation by humiliation and defeat.

and all who were allied to or subject to Mohammed—horsemen, footmen, swordsmen, lancers, and archers—were said to be gathering under the banner of Mohammed the son of Abdallah; and letters from the north related how an expedition of succour and vengeance was gathering at Medina, even as a full-pent storm-cloud gathers over the desert in spring time. The hosts of the man who had preached in vain were rapidly approaching; he whom even in the hour of pilgrimage they had slighted, whose prayers and verses they had mocked, whose family they had cast forth, would soon stand before them to demand a full account of his wrongs.

The terror of the Koraysh must have grown as the hours rolled on; the day of reckoning and doom was at hand, and they could attempt no justification of their wickedness. Presently familiar faces began to be missed—Abbas, the uncle of Mohammed, hitherto a staunch supporter of the Ka'ba, was seen no more in the city: he had gone over to join his nephew, and had abandoned the Koraysh for ever.

The Moslems approached within a day's march of Mecca, and Abu Sofian grew weary of waiting for a fate, which was made more fearful by the vagueness of its nature, and more terrible by its unavoidable certainty. In desperation he called to him two of the leaders of his people, and at nightfall crept out of the city. The hills of Mecca frowned dark and forbidding before the little party as it shuffled through the dust into the gathering darkness. Suddenly from every peak and ridge for miles around there burst forth a gigantic circle of watch fires, a circumstance calculated to produce its intended effect. By this stratagem the invading host seemed even greater than the rumours had suggested. The usually deserted and silent hills were alive with people, the twinkling flames vanished and reappeared as the kindlers walked to and fro, the distant hum of the multitude was borne across the intervening space and filled the lonely wanderers with indefinite fear; in subdued tones they began to speak among themselves as to the true portent of these mysterious sights and sounds.

Suddenly a voice echoed from the darkness calling on Abu Sofian by name, and the chiefs of the Koraysh stood spellbound with awe The voice cried out, "Yonder is Mohammed and

10,000 men: believe or die"; and the wretched men recognised that the speaker who threatened was Abbas, who but a week before had been one of their foremost counsellors. Completely overwhelmed, Abu Sofian and his two companions yielded without a murmur, and were conducted to the tents of the believers; there that night they lay in grave anxiety, awaiting a final audience with the avenging Prophet on the morrow.

When the sun rose, they were conducted into his presence, where they were received sternly and without salute. "Is there any God besides the one True Lord?" cried Mohammed, perhaps in taunting remembrance of the scoffs and sneers he had endured from the idolaters. "Nay," answered Abu Sofian in confusion, "had there been, he would have assisted me against thee." "Admit that I am His Prophet," came the peremptory command. It was a bitter draught to Abu Sofian, this last humiliation, and he hesitated. "Woe is thee," cried Abbas, who stood at hand; "testify or thou diest." "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet," mumbled the chief of the chiefs of the Koraysh.

The Prophet's face lit up with smiles: Mecca had been won, the last entrenchment of idolatry had been carried, the proud had been humbled, and the black stone of the Ka'ba should now form the keystone of Islam. Abu Sofian hasted away to the city to bid the people accept, submit, and believe, even as he himself had done. Ere he reached the city the invaders were pouring down upon it on every side; Khalid and his horsemen were feebly opposed in one quarter, but elsewhere deserted streets and barred-up doors and windows were all the Moslems saw. Mohammed, mounted on his camel, rode up to the Ka'ba, not as a pilgrim, but as the chosen apostle of God entering the Temple of the Lord. Manat, the false God, swayed upon his pedestal and fell in sprawling fragments upon the flags of the courtyard; and, standing amid the splinters of the idol, Mohammed cried, "Truth hath come and falsehood hath vanished, for falsehood is a fleeting dream." The last shrine of idolatry had been swept away, and for untold ages the Ka'ba was destined to the worship of God, the compassionate and compassionating maker and destroyer of all things.

With the innumerable and greedy hosts at his command the

Prophet might have bullied, browbeaten, and oppressed as much as he chose ; but Mohammed stands out above reproach. In the whole city of enemies only five were slain, and with justice—two Meccans who had pursued and indirectly caused the death of Mohammed's daughter, two murderers who had fled from Medina, and a singing girl who had blasphemed ; for the rest, kindness, friendship, and good words.

The conquest of Mecca must have rejoiced the heart of Mohammed perhaps more than any event in his career. To be the friend and protector of his long lost tribe, to be respected and credited by those whom he had so long endeavoured to convert, must have made the victory sweet—even sweeter by reason of the length of time that had elapsed since he had first endeavoured to achieve it.

Suddenly in the midst of the rejoicings and compacting of friendships and the forgiving of wrongs of years, there came an evil adventure. All the Pagan, or at least non-Moslem, Bedawin who lived to the south of Mecca began to acknowledge the supremacy of Mohammed ; but this easy victory did not suit the relentless and military nature of Khalid, the Bedawi commander of horse. To Khalid, battle and slaughter were the breath of life, and a diplomatic victory was to him apparently as odious as a defeat in the field. The fierce warrior nature rebelled at the sight of his enemies submitting without striking or being struck. To alter the situation was the work of a moment, and we read that Khalid achieved his end by the ill-treatment and murder of some pagan tribesmen who desired to ally themselves with the Moslems. Mohammed was shocked beyond expression at this deed, and prayed for the forgiveness of heaven ; but he was obliged to bear the punishment.

The outlying tribes heard the rumour of treachery, and in the desert no rumour flies more quickly ; ere Mecca was fully converted, the Prophet and his army had to move southward to quell the rising confederation of nomad clans. The Moslem forces had been increased by recruits, among them Abu Sofian with men of the Koraysh and Meccan citizens to the extent of 2,000. The army presented a spectacle fair and brave enough as it set in motion. Acres of dark infantry, seamed by ridges of laden camels and splashed with pools of glittering mail-

clad horsemen, above whom waved a forest of banners. Mohammed, viewing this array, could not forbear thinking of the days of Badr when the puny numbers of his train provoked the laughter of Abu Sofian, and he smiled in the pride of his heart when Abu Bekr cried, "Truly we shall not be worsted by reason of our fewness."

In a short space, conscience rebuked him for his vain-glory. At dawn, as the unwieldy battalions lumbered through the pass of Honein, the enemy rushed out on them from an ambuscade. From van to rear, confusion, terror and panic reigned supreme, banners were tossed aside, riderless camels and horses darted hither and thither, each man turning to flee from the press. Allah, Mohammed and plunder were forgotten, and the Moslems rushed away in a headlong flight more disorderly and craven than that of Ohod. The Prophet bawled in consternation, "Whither away?" but his words were unheeded. "Now is the spell broken," sneered a doubting Meccan, as he forced his way through the crowd; but the spell was in truth stronger than ever. Abbas, the new convert, had a voice of brass, and suddenly it rose distinct and audible above the broken cries of panic, calling on the men of Medina to rally. One hundred of the faithful, checked in their mad flight, paused and returned in order; the din of confusion and rout subsided, the army gained heart and confidence, the Pagans in turn were amazed, wavered before the unexpected charge, and betook themselves to flight. "Perdition clutch them!" shrieked the Apostle, hurling gravel in the direction of the retreating foe.

The victorious Moslems pursued the Bedawin from place to place, giving them neither rest nor respite, slaying the fugitives without mercy, capturing their women, tents and beasts in great quantity, until in a few days the desert was clear, and the remnants had either locked themselves up in the strong city of Tayf, or scattered beyond reach of pursuit. Tayf was too strong a city to take by assault, and the Arabs were too little versed in the art of siege to carry it by a more gradual process; further, it was not wise to keep an army of would-be martyrs and saints engaged thus early in the dreary routine of a blockade. After a few formal attempts at battery and escalade had been

made, Mohammed decided to retire with the glamour of victory and success strong in the hearts of his men.

Soon the more amenable of the defeated Arabs came to sue for peace and the return of their wives and families. At first the Moslems were little disposed to entertain these proposals, until an aged woman proclaimed herself the foster-mother of the Prophet, declaring that in the tents of one of the tribes arrayed against the faithful at Honein Mohammed had been reared as a child. For Mohammed to resist an appeal for mercy from such a quarter was impossible ; but the avaricious and grasping nature of his disciples was beyond the reach of any finer feeling, and the authority of the Prophet was taxed to the utmost to quell the quarrelling, murmuring and snarling which instantly arose in their ranks when the release of prisoners was commanded. As regards the Bedawin and chieftains of Mecca who had accepted Islam at the last moment, they were bribed openly and shamelessly, and the Prophet did not think it necessary to conceal from the Meccans his object in doing so. *Quid pro quo* is the law of the Arabs, and the Arab has an insatiable appetite.

Pausing only for a brief space to pay a visit of ceremony to the Ka'ba, Mohammed turned once more towards Medina. Truly there was something there to attract him, for Miriam the Copt was far gone with child; and shortly after his return home, Mohammed was rejoiced at the birth of a son who was named Ibrahim. In his old age the Prophet had become the father of a man child, and it would be difficult for us to imagine the joy such an event must have brought him ; even as Mohammed had sprawled and crept under the cloak of Abu Talib, now the little Ibrahim slept and snuggled in the arms of the Prophet. The old man took pride in the boy, and fondled him and showed him to his wives, who looked sourly on and breathed jealousy and vengeance against Miriam.

While little Ibrahim played by the side of the Apostle of God, the messengers went to and fro, and the first rude foundations of the mighty state of Islam were set firmly down. Obedience to the law, belief in God and the payment of a tithe to the treasury of Medina, were the outward and visible signs of that firmly cemented sense of unity which binds the orthodox Mohammedan

peoples together to this very day. The rough Bedawin were broken to the yoke; the cunning and garrulous townsmen accepted the inevitable; here and there some slight objection or trivial resistance quickly brought the keen sword of the fiery Ali or the thundering horsemen of the ruthless Khalid to accomplish a speedy retribution. Swiftly and surely Arabia was bound hand and foot to the Koran. Tayf, the last refuge of idolatry, yielded of its own free will; and the statue of Lat was hammered in pieces by the orders of Abu Sofian. Christian nomads of Sinai and the Syrian border cast aside their creeds for the rhymes of the son of Abdallah, and their Shaykhs and chiefs, attired in the silks and brocades of Byzantium, came from the north to glorify God and to acknowledge the Prophet in Medina.

In a brief year, Mohammed had passed to the summit of his ambition with scarce an event to cause him pain or anxiety. He was growing old in years, but his work had been done, the mighty engine of regeneration had been set in motion, surely God would be well pleased with his servant, assuredly he might die in peace—had he not been granted all, even to his last wish, a little son? Suddenly, however, there came upon him a cruel blow of fortune, a piercing dart of grief and pain.

The little Ibrahim who but yesterday ran and prattled in the courts, tugged at the Prophet's beard, and was the merriest of the little ones of Medina, is to-day strangely hushed and silent. Miriam looks wild-eyed and distraught; the Prophet prays with burning words to God; perhaps in the dark recesses of the chambers of Ayesha and the others, the hateful laugh of malicious pleasure is heard, but low and subdued by caution. Little Ibrahim stares out upon the world he has sojourned in so short a time, his eyes ablaze, his cheeks flushed, his dimpled limbs lax and flaccid, his breath but a tiny thread parting the dry cracked lips. Mohammed, the man, knows all these signs too well. For but a few moments more can he hold his son to him in this world, but the grand faith in him bears him up through even this; the tears run down his cheeks and he sobs, "Ibrahim, O Ibrahim, if it were not that there is naught but truth and the resurrection certain, and that all must pass through this gate, I would grieve for thee with even a greater grief than this." The child's eyes glaze, the heated body

shudders and chills, and Ibrahim the son of Mohammed is dead.

After the little body was laid in the grave, Mohammed smoothed the earth with his hand saying, "This giveth ease to the afflicted heart, it neither profiteth nor injureth the dead, but it comforteth the living." Who can say that this man was an impostor?

The death of Ibrahim was the last event of any great importance in the life of Mohammed. Arabia was conquered and for the moment at peace; from Bahrein to Hadhramaut, from Hadhramaut to Yemen, from Yemen to Sinai, all acknowledged or pretended to accept the teachings of the Apostle of God. The Bedawin were perhaps restless, the townsfolk in places doubting; but the victory was complete.

At the end of the tenth year after his flight, Mohammed made one more pilgrimage to Mecca. The city had been purified, idolatry cast forth for ever, and Mohammed performed the rites of pilgrimage amid a vast concourse of Moslems among whom not an idolater was to be found. When all was accomplished, Mohammed addressed the people in one last discourse; its words rang in the ears of the Moslems, and there was no district in Arabia which had not its representatives at that gathering. This last exhortation of Mohammed is in fact to this day the guiding rule of the whole Moslem world. Let the student study it with care, for to more than 300 millions of mankind it is an absolute rule of conduct.

"Ye people! Hearken to my words; for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you here again. Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until the end of time.

"The Lord hath ordained to every man the share of his inheritance: a testament is not lawful to the prejudice of heirs.

"The child belongeth to the parent; and the violator of wedlock shall be stoned.

"Whoever claimeth falsely another for his father, or another for his master, the curse of God and the angels and of all mankind shall rest upon him.

"Ye people! Ye have rights demandable of your wives, and

they have rights demandable of you. Upon them it is incumbent not to violate their conjugal faith nor commit any act of open impropriety ; which things if they do, ye have authority to shut them up in separate apartments and to beat them with stripes, yet not severely. But if they refrain therefrom, clothe them and feed them suitably. And treat your women well ; for they are with you as captives and prisoners ; they have not power over anything as regards themselves. And ye have verily taken them on the security of God, and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God.

"And your slaves, see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear. And if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then sell them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be tormented.

"Ye people! hearken to my speech and comprehend the same. Know that every Moslem is the brother of every other Moslem. All of you are on the same equality."

These solemn words have gone forth to the world ; they are the living things of Islam, and until they are neglected Islam will be a force in the world. Faults in the Mohammedan body are not difficult to find ; but this at least may be said, that in no part of the world does there exist a large Mohammedan society in which men are cruel to those whom they employ, indifferent to their parents, systematically dishonest to one another, or socially oppressive to the poor—all of which odious vices are practised as common customs in the land whence come those persons who sally forth to regenerate the East. It is not Mohammedan law which we should admire, but the observance by Moslems of their own free will of those social duties which Christians will not perform save at the end of a policeman's truncheon.

Mohammed now returned once more towards Medina. There was little to trouble him in the affairs of Arabia, save that in Yemen an impostor named Aswad, who pretended to prophetic powers, headed a small rising which was easily quelled ; but the noise of his limited excursions cannot have caused much uneasiness in the councils of the Prophet. His thoughts were now turned toward those who had neglected his summons of

four years ago. Many of the Bedawin and Arabs of the northern border were wavering between the two creeds, many had accepted the new faith, some hesitated to abandon entirely the old one. A strong blow was all that was necessary to establish the ascendancy of Islam among them ; and consequently the first act of Mohammed, on achieving complete dominion over the east and south, was to prepare an army for the north to confirm the faithful and to extend the ever-widening circle of enlightenment. The disastrous expedition of Muta had cost the life of the Prophet's dearest friend, Zeid ; to his son, Osama, the command of the expedition of revenge was entrusted.

Ere the troops could be despatched, however, Mohammed was suddenly seized with a fever ; for a week he strove manfully to perform his duties, but at last sickness got the better of him : he could no longer command and order as he had been accustomed, and at last he could hardly lead the daily prayers as he had been wont. Medina was in a ferment, the chieftains of the Prophet looked on one another askance. Ali and Fatima began to think of the future, Omar was distraught and troubled, the gentle Abu Bekr plunged in grief. Mohammed grew worse, and knew that his end was near. True to his brave nature, he used his ebbing strength to tell the people that the time had come when he was about to depart from them ; and when he found that he could no longer rise he commanded that Abu Bekr should lead the prayers in his stead.

The fever ran its course but did not abate ; his flesh burned like fire and he groaned in torment, but no complaint escaped him ; the greater grew his pain, the more did he praise and glorify God ; in the paroxysms of the sickness which held him he stinted not from reciting to himself the longest *suras*, and proclaiming the Unity of the Lord. As delirium swept down upon him he muttered a last direction that he would give the world. But Omar, dreading some disaster, forbade the women to bring ink or paper, saying that the Prophet was beyond his senses ; and when a little later he was asked if he wished to write, he said he no longer desired to do so.

Presently his wandering thoughts turned to other things, and he begged Ayesha to distribute what little gold there was in the house amongst the poor. So on through a long night Mohammed

wrestled with the Angel of Death. In the morning the mosque was crowded with eager and anxious people. Abu Bekr, as had become customary, led the prayers; suddenly a curtain before a doorway leading into the mosque was raised, and there stood Mohammed supported by a friend and a servant—on his face was the smile of one at peace, who has accomplished a mighty task and whose strength is well-nigh spent. For a short space he spoke to the people, affirming the truth of his mission and challenging contradiction; then he withdrew to his room, leaving the faithful rejoicing in his recovery. Abu Bekr left the precincts of the mosque and the news spread through the town that Mohammed had been spared. But it was not so. In Ayesha's room Mohammed lay quiet for a little while, then suddenly broke out into a fervent prayer, "O God, I pray assistance in the agony of death." Thrice he called upon Gabriel to approach him; then, after a little restless fit, he whispered, "Lord, pardon me—eternity in paradise—yea, the blessed companionship on high." He sighed once, and died.

The breath had hardly passed out of Mohammed's body before the turbulent spirit of disintegration, which is the characteristic of the Arabian genius, began to assert itself. The Meccans and Medinans, the Koraysh and the refugees, the true believers and the hypocrites, the leaders and the led, each began to eye the other with the glance of disparagement and jealousy. Before the sun had set the Shaykhs of Medina were busy choosing a leader; but in truth they were bound fast by bonds stronger than they knew.

While the Shaykhs of Medina wasted precious moments in garrulous discussion, while Ali sulked in his house, word was brought to Abu Bekr concerning the dangerous position of affairs. The aged companion of the Prophet was no more perturbed than when he hid his master in the cavern; he felt that his duty lay plain before him, and without fear or hesitation he directed his steps to the hall where divided councils prevailed. Burning words saluted him; amidst the babble of angry voices one shrilled above the rest, "We are your protectors—our valour saved you—we are the upholders of the faith—one of us shall be the leader." Omar was ready to take up the challenge, let all come to wreck; a fight of words and blows was worth any

sacrifice. Abu Bekr checked him without heat; he admitted the worth of the deeds of the men of Medina, but with that simple pride which is instinctive in the high-born Arab, he added, "We are of the Koraysh, and it is only to a son of the Koraysh that Moslems will give obedience." He then bade those present choose between Omar and Abu Obeyda. Omar, passionate as ever, wrung Abu Bekr by the hand; "Nay, neither Omar nor Abu Obeyda but Abu Bekr shall be Caliph. O companion and dearly beloved of the Prophet, thou art his chosen one alone." The clamorous assembly was stilled for a moment; then one of the Shaykhs of Medina stepped forward and hailed Abu Bekr as leader of the Moslems. "Traitor, thou desertest thy brother through envy," cried one. "Not envy but justice," replied the chieftain. "Let there be two Caliphs, one of Medina and one of Mecca," shouted another, clutching at a compromise. "We are the Emirs, you the Wazirs!" replied Abu Bekr with lofty assurance. For a moment all was in confusion, and ere five minutes had elapsed the men of Medina had divided among themselves. Amidst cries of dissent and approval Omar shouted, in a voice that rang above the tumult, "Abu Bekr, stretch out thy hand"; and, himself striking the palm of his kinsman, betokened his oath of fealty and allegiance. On the instant there was a rush to acclaim the new Caliph of the Moslems; the spirit of Islam, unity and brotherhood, conquered the native spirit of dissension, and Abu Bekr was leader of the people.

If indeed the spread of Mohammedanism has been the result of chance, then the greatest factor in the success of the new religion was the personality of Abu Bekr. In him the student will find the highest expression of the good and devout Moslem; for all unconsciously the nobler spirits who accept the revelations of the Koran seem to model their behaviour through life on the conduct of the first Caliph. Unflinching fortitude, simplicity, modesty and immovable justice were his virtues; and happily enough even to this day there are not a few reverend men in the ranks of Islam who would bear comparison with Abu Bekr.

# CHAPTER XI

## THE TORNADO

632–34 A.D. 11–13 A.H.

HARDLY had Abu Bekr assumed the office of Vicar of the Apostle of God than it was necessary for him to exert his authority. All about Medina the news of the Prophet's death had spread consternation and dismay amongst the city folk. Out in the desert camps, the raw and crafty nomads muttered and nudged one another by the guest fires. "He is dead, and dead men do not collect taxes"—"He is dead and who will follow him?"—"He is dead, and where is Medina and where is Mecca?" must have been whispered in every council tent through the length and breadth of the land. The Bedawin plotted and the townsmen quailed. The great Empire of the son of Abdallah seemed to shrivel up and wither under the very eyes of the leaders of Islam. Even the dauntless Omar was apprehensive: the allies of yesterday might become enemies to-morrow, the friends of the morning might be traitors at nightfall, the converts of the day of Honein were cold and irresponsive; it behoved every man to guard his house and watch with diligence.

Abu Bekr alone was unchanged, and with calm confidence gave orders that the army which the Prophet had assembled under Osama should proceed northwards. Omar protested that all was on the hazard, and that the men at arms should not be sent away just when an attack might be expected. Abu Bekr silenced the objections by the affirmation that the commands of Mohammed must be obeyed. Osama was but a youth, and Omar begged that an older or abler man might be sent in command. Abu Bekr flamed out in unwonted anger.

"Hath not the Prophet of God chosen him, and wouldst thou have me choose another?" he cried. Omar stood reproved, and Osama set out with the army.

No sooner had the troops departed beyond recall than the rebellion that Omar had dreaded and foreseen broke out on all sides. From the remote regions of Nejd, Bahrein, Hadramaut and Oman came disconsolate tax-gatherers and discredited emissaries, each with his special tidings of ruin, disaffection and rebellion, which became more terrible when it was seen that these messengers from afar were only repeating accounts of events precisely similar to those actually taking place in the neighbouring districts of Mecca and Medina. To make matters worse, no less than three impostors had raised their heads and were proclaiming themselves as Messengers of God and were daily gaining adherents and power. The only news which tended to relieve the general depression was that Asad, the false Prophet of Yemen, had been slain and the rebellion in that country quelled; but in every other quarter the most melancholy apprehension could not but have been felt.

At this dismal hour the rebel tribes of the desert began advancing on Medina, and soon the city was almost surrounded by the encampments of disaffected Bedawin. It was not yet war, but this gradual closing in toward the town could not but have filled its people with unhappy forebodings. Soon a number of chiefs came in from the camps as a deputation, and haughtily proclaimed their immunity from further taxation; but added, as if by way of favour and concession, that they would continue to observe the other precepts of the creed they had adopted. The elders of the city and the Shaykhs of the Koraysh, sunken in the depths of despair, were prepared to accept any terms no matter how humiliating, and endeavoured to excuse themselves—"And would it be legal," said they, "to force true believers to pay a tax?" Abu Bekr, however, had neither craft nor fear; with plain downright words he told the council that the law was one for tent-dwellers and townsmen, that those who withheld the sacred tithe were apostates, and that he himself would be the first to march against them, trusting to God for victory. "He has more faith than all of us," cried the impetuous Omar, and the Bedawi ambassadors were dismissed with a refusal.

That night the tribesmen decided to wreak their vengeance on the devoted city. At sunset parties of greedy warriors began stealing from the encampments, but before they reached the walls they were met by a resolute band who turned them back. Repulsed but not defeated, the Bedawin returned once more on the following night. This time a large party fell upon them and threw them into complete disorder: it was composed of the old men and boys of Medina, hastily armed, unapt in war, but fired with the courage of heroes. The Bedawin fled in all directions, leaving baggage, tents and plunder far behind. In a few days certain tribes who had held aloof from open insurrection brought in their taxes; Mecca (where sedition had been quelled with firmness and rapidity) despatched horsemen and arms to Medina; and a little later Osama returned with a booty-laden army and the intelligence that he had spread terror and destruction with fire and sword into the very heart of Southern Syria.

The incoherent efforts of the Bedawin to throw off the shackles with which they had been bound failed ignominiously. Abu Bekr now had at his disposal a force sufficient to carry the war into the rebels' country, and before it resistance crumpled up and vanished. When a Moslem column sallied forth to attack a tribe that had shown insolence or signs of independence, it trebled its numbers on the road and generally ended by accepting the allegiance of the recalcitrant tribe itself. Within one short year of Mohammed's death, the Arabs had apcstatised, rebelled, and submitted.

Now that Abu Bekr had reconsolidated the body of Islam, it became incumbent upon him to perform his missionary duty as Caliph and to send the words of the prophet out to the four corners of the earth, and it was against the Arabs of lower Mesopotamia and Hira that he decided the first attempt should be made.

This border land between Arabia and Iran had for so long been the scene of Arabian and Persian strife, that the local nomads must have been imbued with a certain political enthusiasm in addition to the natural religious confidence of opinion with which they were inspired. Further, the sedentary native population of the lands adjoining Hira were strongly impregnated

with a Jewish and Arabian leaven; their religious opinions tended towards Christianity or to some local forms of Manichaeism and were opposed to the pure Zoroastrianism of the Persians. The Kings of Hira had left a memory of Arabian dominion that could not be obliterated by the lax and unsettled government which had dethroned them. The Persian forces were generally discredited in the eyes of the Arabs by the disasters of previous years, and the battle of Dhu Kar was still a glorious record of what might again be repeated in the future. The public knowledge that the people of Yemen had accepted Islam in favour of the Persian yoke was one last preparative accident in favour of the aggressors. Hira and Babylonia were regions which had not been plundered for many years and had not shared in the generally blighting consequences of the preceding wars. Rich towns were surrounded by wealthy villages; water and food were within the reach of an invader; the winter was unusually mild; and the hot season held out no terrors to people from the south.

With the keen sense of a true Minister of State, Abu Bekr refrained from hampering his generals by minute and unnecessary orders, and omitted to draw up for them a detailed plan of campaign. Having selected the two ablest leaders amongst the Arabs in Iyadh-ibn-Ghanam and Khalid-ibn-Walid, he separated them and their armies into two completely independent forces. Iyadh was bidden to advance on Hira from the Syrian desert in the north west; Khalid-ibn-Walid had orders to approach the same city from Nejd in the south; and the supreme command was reserved as a prize for the chieftain who first reached his destination.

Khalid had under his control a force such as perhaps Arabia had never before produced, an army numbering perhaps 18,000 men. It was no hungry horde butting blindly along the lines of least resistance in search of fresh pasture, such as had fought at Dhu Kar; nor was it a loosely knit confederation leagued together for a brief season, as at the Fosse; nor yet a gigantic raiding party such as Osama had carried into Syria. The forces under Khalid were of an entirely different composition; they were organised into divisions, their enthusiasm was primarily for an ideal, and their hopes could not be fulfilled by a

single campaign. Permanent conquest and the spread of their creed were the objects which the early Moslems had in view. That lust for plunder, riches and women may have revived their drooping spirits need not be contradicted. But the motive power of their conquests was derived from higher sources. Had merely piratical instinct been their guide, the first success would have proved their ruin.

On the other hand, the Persians were disorganised, unpopular, and probably incompetent; the troops of the satraps were in all likelihood undisciplined craven levies with neither hearts nor minds for battle. We may also assume that, at the date of Khalid's invasion, little help could be expected from headquarters. The true strength of the Persian armies lay in the wild mountain horsemen of the modern districts of Wazna and Shirwan. But these were feudal levies; and when the life of a monarch is precarious and the succession doubtful, the baron and tribal chief, if he be wise, will as a rule keep his men at home or, if he be ambitious, in the vicinity of the court. Consequently, when Khalid broke through the deserts and swampy belts which divide lower Mesopotamia from Nejd, he entered a densely populated but almost defenceless land.

The Persian governor, Hormizd, who had received intelligence of the incursion, gathered together his army to oppose the invaders. Hormizd was no coward, and the chivalrous traditions of an hereditary nobility prompted him to challenge Khalid to single combat in view of both armies. To a knight of the desert there could not have come a more welcome request. Khalid slew the satrap after a brief engagement, and the fall of the Persian lord was a signal for the Moslem attack. With a frenzied roar the Arabs charged upon the wavering lines before them, and lance, mace, and sword were soon dyed with blood. The Persians fled from the pitiless slaughter in vain; they were pursued and put to death without mercy; many perforce had to bide their ground, being manacled together in living masses, thus offering only a more helpless target for the darts and weapons of the victorious Arabs. From this last circumstance, Khalid's first battle was known to the poets as "the day of chains."

The victory opened the lower regions to Khalid, and he hastened to take advantage of it. The peasant population were

neither plundered nor annoyed, but were commanded henceforth to pay their taxes to the Caliph of Medina and were permitted to rest in peace. A second Persian army which hastened down to endeavour to check the Moslems met with no happier fate than the first; the leaders were killed, and the battle in which they fell was little more than a massacre. Towns and villages surrendered without question or were abandoned in haste, and the plunder and treasures which were left behind were enough to have satisfied three times the number of men that Khalid had at his disposal; but this neither stayed the advance nor diminished the numbers of the intrepid Moslem army.

As Khalid marched further north, a third array was prepared by the Persians to meet him. This consisted of a host of Christian Bedawin from northern Mesopotamia and a few apostates who had fled from Arabia during the late rebellion. Under its own Arabian Shaykhs this force endeavoured to stay the resistless onslaught of the invaders; if we have need of proof of the poor quality of the two previous divisions which had succumbed before the Moslems in the south, we have it in the fact that this motley assembly of undisciplined nomads offered the most serious resistance that had yet been encountered. So obstinately indeed did they contest the field, that the remorseless Khalid swore a mighty oath that he would slay every prisoner that fell into his hand. Eventually the Christians gave way, and a multitude were captured during their retreat. If Khalid had one object it must have been to inspire absolute terror into the active Arab supporters of the Persians; to the neutral peasant he was merciful, but to the warrior he was absolutely ruthless. For one day and one night the Moslems are said to have been engaged in slaughtering the wretched men they had made prisoners. From sunset to sunset on the bank of a canal the unfortunate Bedawin were beheaded man by man, until its waters ran so red that it was known thereafter as the "stream of blood."

Khalid had now passed far beyond the limits usually explored by the petty plundering expeditions of the border raiders, and had penetrated those highly cultivated regions which the science of ages had intersected with waterways for irrigation and transit; where the crops were ever abundant; where civilisation had never

received a check for nigh upon 2,000 years; where wealth, prosperity, and certainty were the ordinary terms of existence. To the lean and hungry warriors from the south, this land must have appeared like the sudden realisation of the phantom mirage of the desert. The populous and clustering brown mud villages, the olive-green stretches of ripening corn, the vast groves of palms, the rigid, direct and well-controlled canals, the mighty towers and gleaming palaces of the cities moulded from plastic cement, the richness of the clothing of the inhabitants, the evident signs of intense and elaborate cultivation, must have formed an incredible contrast to the land of barren wastes, tattered tents, scattered flocks and insignificant hamlets from which the Arabs had emerged.

Khalid now collected a number of boats from southern Mesopotamia, and apparently with the aid of the peasantry[1] transported his infantry and baggage along one of the great canals that led northward, while he himself preceded them with a cloud of horsemen. The governor of Hira, advised of this fact, sent forward a strong party of cavalry, under the command of his son, with the object of closing the locks of that waterway on which the enemy had embarked. The governor's orders were carried out, the stream was deflected, and the Arabs to their intense chagrin were deposited in their boats on the dry bed of the cutting. Khalid immediately divined the Persian scheme, and hurrying forward with the whole of his cavalry soon reached the point where the hydraulic engines were being put in motion by the Persian prince and his troops. The Arabs fell upon their foes, scattered them in all directions, slew their leaders, reopened the locks, and refloated the stranded infantry.

News of this disaster reached the governor of Hira at the same moment as a despatch from the Persian court announcing the death of Ardashir, the King. There could be now no question of fighting. The unlucky governor knew that for the moment his troops would not obey him, that no order was valid, and that anarchy and confusion would be the only masters of Persia until a new King was proclaimed; accordingly he had no choice but to retire, leaving the cities and castles to fend for themselves.

The castles and monasteries surrounding Hira were

[1] It seems unlikely that desert Arabs could have performed this feat unaided.

occupied and the town was called upon to surrender. The dispossessed monks begged the inhabitants to consider the terms of the conqueror, and the morning after the blockade had been declared Khalid was interviewed by a deputation from the city. "Death, tribute or Islam," were the laconic terms which Khalid laid before the ambassadors. These men were of the same stock as the Moslems, knew and quoted the same poets, thought in the same language, indulged in the same sports and were moved by the same passions; but most of them were Christians. After a little hesitation, their leader selected the payment of tribute as their choice. "Obstinate men, you are lost in a desert, yet you choose a stranger to guide you instead of one of your own." Amr, the leader of the deputation, had a simple wrapped in a packet hanging from his neck. "What stuff is this?" said Khalid, pointing to the envelope. "A strong poison," replied Amr. "For what?" enquired Khalid. "To slay myself if thou wert not inclined to mercy," answered Amr. "The life of man is predestined, neither can he lengthen it or shorten it," cried Khalid. "In the name of the compassionating and compassionate God! Nothing will harm the man who invokes Him;" and with these words he crammed the compound into his mouth. Beyond a little transient pain he felt no inconvenience from his rash act, and the deputation was duly impressed with the strength of the Moslem faith.[1]

Hira surrendered, and the surrounding lords and nobles accepted Moslem rule without a murmur. Taxes were agreed upon and imposed, governors appointed, garrisons and colonists distributed through the conquered country; and in a few days Khalid effected a settlement, both thorough and businesslike, of the region he had annexed.

Meanwhile all was in confusion at the Persian court. Massacre, assassination, plot, counterplot, revolution, intrigue, and conspiracy were the only employments of the ministers and nobles, and, unfortunately for the Persian Empire, no one seemed to

[1] As regards the credibility of this incident we have the following explanation: (1) That the story is an invention. (2) That the poison was of poor quality. (3) That Amr and Khalid arranged matters beforehand. (4) That Khalid's faith was of an order similar to that of Christian scientists. (5) That he had a stomach similar to another Bedawi, to whom I gave ten Livingston Rouse Pills without producing noticeable effect.

gain the upper hand; all pretenders to the throne appeared equally unpopular, yet a sequence of assassinations seemed only to increase the inexhaustible supply. Whole families were extirpated root and branch; princesses were slain lest they should prove with child; nobles were elevated to royal rank only to be flayed or throttled within the hour. The messengers of disaster and defeat gave their tidings unheeded; the commanders of the armies remained in their camps, paralysed and confused. No orders for concentration were issued, no plan of campaign was divulged; and the hosts of the Sassanian Empire stood in spell-bound impotence before an empty throne.

Presently the following despatch reached the quarrelling nobles at Madain :—

> In the name of God the Compassionate and Compassionating.
>
> Khalid, the son of Walid, to the Lords of Iran.
>
> Laud to the Lord who dissolveth your dominion and shattereth your sword of power.
>
> Unite with us in the submission to faith or yield to our rule.
>
> By force or goodwill you shall accept our law and it shall be given you by men who lust after death as much as ye lust after life.

This stern summons for an instant chilled the hearts of the wrangling chiefs. For a brief space the courtiers called a truce among themselves and chose one Farukhzad as regent and minister. But firm and hereditary tyranny was the only scheme of government then comprehended by the Persian people; and since the word of a temporary ruler carried little weight, the Moslems were suffered to rest in peace.

Khalid now began to grow anxious as to the fate of his colleague Iyadh, who had vanished into the northern deserts more than three months before the fall of Hira and concerning whom nothing had been heard. His advance on Hira had been planned from the north, and it had been presumed that he would first debouch on the Euphrates Valley before striking southwards. Accordingly, after Khalid had settled the government of the newly conquered territories he turned his troops

toward El Faluja, in hopes of encountering the tardy division from the Syrian desert. On his way he captured the two frontier posts of Anbar and 'Ain Tamr; at both strongholds the local Arabs vainly endeavoured to assist the Persian garrisons, but on each occasion the Persians abandoned their fortresses without offering any serious resistance.

At the last mentioned castle, Khalid received news from Iyadh. That chieftain, it appeared, had decided to attack the castle of Jaumat Jandal in the oasis of Jauf before turning eastward. A glance at the map will immediately convince the student that this was a very necessary precaution, since all communication between Medina and the upper Euphrates lay at the mercy of the populous and hostile colony of settled Arabs who dwelled in the oasis. At Jaumat Jandal, however, Iyadh had encountered unexpected and serious opposition; he had endeavoured to carry the fortress by storm, but having failed in the first instance, had been compelled to undertake the siege, and during this operation the surrounding tribes had encompassed his force on all sides. At the time when he succeeded in establishing communication with Khalid, Iyadh was in a position of serious and extreme peril and he appealed to his more fortunate comrade for aid.

Leaving sufficient garrisons in both his newly occupied posts, Khalid advanced at the head of his best troops to the relief of Iyadh; the distance of 200 miles he traversed in ten days and arrived just in time to intercept fresh tribesmen from coming to the assistance of the people of the oasis. The presence of Khalid and his men was sufficient to assure the Moslems of victory, the Christian nomads dispersed, the castle itself was stormed and captured and its defenders put to the sword.

Fifteen days after effecting the relief of Iyadh, Khalid reappeared before Hira, where a host of new converts received him with shouts of acclamation. There it was learned that the Persians and Christian Arabs of northern Mesopotamia had made a faint-hearted attack on the castle of Anbar. With commendable promptitude, Khalid reinforced the garrison and himself set out to attack the enemy in the open. By means of a carefully matured strategic plan it was arranged that Khalid's mobile force should make a night attack on the enemy in co-operation

with the troops who held 'Ain Tamr and Anbar. The bold and complicated scheme succeeded to perfection ; the allied Persians and Arabs were surprised in three places at once, and were utterly scattered and disorganised amidst a terrible slaughter. Having delivered this blow at the main body of his enemies, Khalid broke up his army for a short time into a number of small columns, pursuing, harassing, and dispersing the remaining tribes and garrisons which had not hitherto had the fear of the sword of the Lord instilled into their breasts.

By these methods, ere a year had elapsed since he had entered the modern province of Basra, Khalid had uprooted the rule of the Persians, broken the power of the Christian Arabs, and subjected a whole country not only to a new government, but to a new system of thought, a new religion and a new code of ethics. The energy, decision and mental balance which Khalid displayed in this brilliant campaign should place him among the great captains of history ; yet how many soldiers have even heard of his name ?

While Khalid the son of Walid conquered in the East, the Caliph, Abu Bekr, devised and prepared for the conversion of the West. The Imperial rule in Syria never appears to have recovered from the Persian invasion. Governors and officials there were indeed, and even levies of ill-disciplined soldiers who burlesqued as Roman legionaries ; but the Imperial spirit of obedience and cohesion had vanished or decayed. The tribes of the Syrian border appear to have entirely lost their Roman veneer and become more closely allied to the Arabians ; the towns of Bostra, Damascus, Tiberias, Caesarea, and Jerusalem looked more to themselves for defence than to Constantinople. Each section of the older machinery of government had gradually weakened and faded ; laws were little more than a name ; Imperial traditions tarnished and dim ; religion an exhausted fire.

The Syrians were still Semitic by nature. The desert dialect had undoubtedly advanced even as the Roman and Greek tongues receded, and a Semitic tongue had once more formally reconquered that which it had never lost. The fact that the sonorous verses of the poets of the desert had been long welcome in the houses of the Christian nobles of Damascus is only the logical preface to the rapid spread of Islam. To the Arabian

ear there is a wonderful magic in the swaying, undulating, vibrating cadence of the Koran. Even as the lover of music will grow enthralled by some complex symphony of a great master, so will the Arab become rapt and uplifted by the very sound rather than by the sense of the words of the Book.

Shortly after Khalid-ibn-Walid had left for Hira, another Khalid, the son of Said, gathered together an army at Tayma, recruited from Yemen and the Red Sea coast. The only defence of Syria lay in the Christian tribes of the border, which formed the sole resource of the Romans. They were marshalled under their chiefs, and set out to hurl back their brethren of the south; but instead of defending the desert line, they melted away without striking a blow. The Moslems advanced cautiously into the Jordan valley, and near Jericho (?) were attacked by regular troops under an Armenian named Bahan. The Christians were put to flight, and Khalid-ibn-Said, feeling that the friendly deserts were now receding in his rear, paused for reinforcements. These were sent forward by Abu-Bekr under the command of two chieftains named Ikrima and Dhu'l-kela, who joined the main army with orders to carry on the war in the Jordan valley. Bahan, who had not been so badly beaten as the Moslems supposed, retired slowly before them towards Damascus.

At the distance of one day's ride from the capital the invaders halted, as if puzzled by the slight resistance they had encountered. Bahan had now lured the Arabs into the heart of an unknown land, which to them, by reason of its unaccustomed surroundings, was perhaps as confusing as the desert would have proved to a Roman soldier. The stone-walled fields, the paved highways, the innumerable castles and valleys, and the rocky and terraced hills cannot but have been unfamiliar to the Arabs from Yemen and the south. At Damascus, at Bostra and in the surrounding cities the Romans had not only garrisons but allies in plenty; by a fine strategic movement these scattered forces were made to converge on the Arab camp. Attacked at night in front and rear and on either flank, Khalid, the son of Said, was panic-stricken and helpless. With a good part of his men he fled in disorder to the desert, leaving Ikrima and Dhu'l-kela to hold their own as best they could. The irregular

formation and general lassitude of the Roman forces may be judged from the fact that these two chieftains were not only able to cover the retreat of their cowardly leader, but contrived to hold the enemy at a distance after the first shock of battle had passed off. Abu Bekr was undismayed by the news of this reverse, for it was completely outbalanced by the glorious and overwhelming success of Khalid-ibn-Walid in Irak. In Medina the news of these victories in the east and disasters in the west inflamed the minds of the Arabs with two equally violent passions, the greed of conquest and the desire for vengeance, both of which in an equal degree tended to unite and cement the new brotherhood which had grown up amongst them. The Caliph saw fresh armies spring into being for his use as quickly as he despatched them to the front. Whole tribes who but a few months before had been compromising, prevaricating or breaking out into open rebellion were now eager to prove their devotion to the Koran with their lives.

Hardly had the news been received and discussed ere Abu Bekr despatched into Syria no less than four armies, the disposition of which is worthy of some attention. The first division, under Yazid the son of Abu Sofian, held Moab and the southern end of the Dead Sea ; the second, under Shurahbil, advanced into the Jordan valley ; the third, under Abu Obeyda, traversed the Hauran and supported Ikrima and Dhu'l-kela on the line of the Yarmuk ; Amr with the fourth contingent swept south of the Dead Sea and threatened Gaza and Jerusalem.

Meanwhile the Romans were not idle. The Emperor Heraclius, at last roused to the seriousness of the situation, had proceeded to Emesa and there marshalled his armies, even as had his predecessor Aurelian when confronted with the desert soldiers of Zenobia. But the Romans were no longer facing mercenary desert chieftains led by the merchants of a trading city, but were standing face to face with the Semite of the south united, transformed, and ennobled by an idea. The weapons, the language, and the appearance of the enemy were as before ; but the motive, the power, and the actions were of another age. The Romans seem to have had but little conception of the struggle in which they were about to engage, for their

straggling and undisciplined armies were broken up into divisions and despatched in different directions to attack the four Emirs. The Arabs, desiring to bring about a single and decisive action, contracted simultaneously on to the right flank, where Abu Obeyda held supreme command ; while the Romans, who seemingly permitted the Arabs to dictate the whole course of the campaign, contracted in a similar manner so as to cover Damascus.

Abu Bekr, who was kept closely informed of the course of events, now took a step which shows him to have been a supreme master of strategy. The problem confronting him was serious and difficult. Khalid was master of Irak, Abu Obeyda was confronted with superior forces in Syria, and a victory was essential. Abu Bekr sent a command to Khalid ordering him to join Abu Obeyda with half his army, leaving Irak to be guarded by the remainder under Mothanna.

Khalid had now a task after his own heart. Swooping out of the desert he appeared unexpectedly in the rear of the Roman forces encamped on the Yarmuk. Between the main army and Damascus there were many encampments of Christian Bedawin ; and the great Emir knew full well that these were the enemies to attack, for a decisive victory over them would fill the whole of the Arab allies of the Romans with doubt and consternation, bring over the waverers, and intimidate the remainder. Consequently, Khalid's first blow was dealt at a Ghassanid encampment ; the border Arabs were surprised and dispersed, and probably scattered far and wide among the other Christian tribes the news of the prowess and unconquerable valour of their brethren of the south. Having achieved this politic victory, Khalid swept southwards and surrounded the city of Bostra, which capitulated almost immediately.

After thus securing for himself the honour of accepting the submission of the first city in Syria to acknowledge the Caliphate, he proceeded north to join his comrades on the Yarmuk. There the Moslems and Christians stood facing one another, separated only by the narrow river ; each party kept a close watch on the movements of the other, but neither seemed anxious to initiate the final engagement. The invaders were eager to obtain the defection of the Christian Arabs, while the Romans seemed

confused and infirm of purpose in the face of the new and unfamiliar enemy. For close upon a month the two antagonists remained in this curious position, during which time daily skirmishing served only to weaken the morale of the Romans and to increase the confidence of the Moslem. At last the Roman leaders decided to bring to an end a situation daily growing more and more intolerable. Headed by venerable priests, encouraged by the chanting of psalms, fortified by the presence of sacred relics and by the sermons and exhortations of hermits, the Roman army marched out to a decisive and final action.

The Moslems were early in the field; each chieftain at the head of his division was eager to strike independently of the other. Khalid, however, announced that battles could no longer be won after the old fashion, that the chief command must be relegated to one man, and that command he assigned to himself. Without demur the Emirs admitted his pre-eminence, and Khalid took charge of the conduct of the battle. The Moslem horse and foot were marshalled in divisions, the women chanting in the rear, the Emirs and Shaykhs preaching and exhorting in the forefront. As if to add to the battle fury of the invaders, the Moslems saw paraded before them in the distance the crosses they abhorred, the images they longed to destroy, the pictures they hungered to rend, and heard the voices of the monks raised in the praise of Isa and Miriam whom they had made gods beside God the Lord of all.

Khalid watched for the favourable moment when to launch his army to the fray, for his practised eye alone knew the instant when the word might be given. Presently a man ran through the lines calling for Khalid. "A messenger from Medina," went up the cry. "All is well," said the man as he ran to Khalid's side; then gaining his ear, whispered, "Alas, Abu Bekr is dead and Omar is Caliph." Khalid bade him tell no man, and seeing that all was in order gave signal for the battle. The Christians held their ground manfully, the discipline and traditions of the legions held good, but alas! treacherous to the last, the fickle Arab horsemen who guarded the flanks of the Romans went over to the enemy, at first man by man, then squadron by squadron, then at last in a body. Betrayed, inco-

herent, and disorganised, the Christians turned to withdraw into their camp, but the battle had been too violently engaged to permit of retreat; the Moslems followed close upon the Roman heels, retreat turned to rout and rout to a massacre, the camp was a shambles, the river dammed with corpses, and the army of Heraclius a thing of the past.

The battle ended, Khalid regretfully opened the despatch which had been brought from Medina at the commencement of the engagement. The Emirs then learned that Abu Bekr the Caliph had taken a fever and had died even as had the Prophet. On his deathbed he had commanded that Omar should be his successor, and that certain lands of his own should be sold to meet the expenses to which the people had been put for his maintenance during his reign. Further he had commanded that the moment a decisive victory had been gained in Syria, Khalid should return to Irak to reinforce Mothanna.

So passed away the first of the Caliphs. His death was as his life had been, disinterested, honest, and simple; his last thoughts were of Islam and the Moslems, of obedience to his master's commands and the spread of his master's faith. Omar took over the charge from Abu Bekr, and on the very night of his death laid him to rest in a grave beside that of the Prophet. Henceforth Ayesha never came to mourn into the room of the dead save decorously veiled as in the presence of a stranger.

# CHAPTER XII

## THE LOCUSTS

634–43 A.D. 13–23 A.H.

### § 1. *Syria*

THE moment Omar assumed the office of Caliph he gave vent to his personal dislike of Khalid-ibn-Walid, of whom he had ever been jealous, and with whom, but for the good offices of Abu Bekr, he would more than once have been engaged in actual combat. By the same post which brought the news of Abu Bekr's death came an order for the degradation of Khalid from the rank of Emir, putting him for ever under the command of Abu Obeyda. However, the original discipline of the Moslems was such that this provoked neither disunion nor recrimination among the leaders; and henceforth, although Khalid fought for Islam in a subordinate position, he fought with the same indomitable courage and skill as he had when supreme commander.

Omar, who seems, like his colleagues, to have been endowed with a kind of miraculous strategic talent, conducted the whole course of the Syrian campaign from Medina. Here are his orders to the Emirs after the battle of the Yarmuk: "The enemy must be struck in his vitals. Commence by taking Damascus, which is the key of Syria. Hold Fahl, Homs, and the district of Filistin in awe with cavalry while you press Damascus. When you take the city, place Yazid and his army in charge of the town and district, and despatch the three other Emirs and their armies to take Fahl and destroy the Roman army encamped there. When this has been accomplished, Abu Obeyda and Khalid will proceed with their forces to Homs.

Shurahbil and Amr will remain in the Jordan valley to complete the conquest of that region and subsequently Filistin. Until these operations are concluded the other four armies will act in concert, and the supreme command will rest with the Emir in charge of the region where actual hostilities are taking place."

Against organisation and strategy so deliberate and methodical, it was not to be expected that the dislocated and shattered forces of the Romans would make much resistance. Damascus surrendered after an obstinate resistance, the inhabitants being given the usual choice of tribute, exile, or death, and the whole district was conquered completely. From the outlying fortress of Tadmor or Palmyra, to the town of Derat, every Christian post or castle was taken and occupied. In the Jordan valley the last remnants of the Roman army of the Yarmuk were utterly destroyed ; Tiberias and its surrounding cities were captured ; while North Syria and Filistin, the last refuge of the Romans, were separated by a solid and compact block of country, entirely cleared of the enemy, entirely subjected and unlikely to revolt.

## § 2. *Irak*

Mothanna, whom we left in Irak, guarding the newly conquered lands with an attenuated and depleted army, soon began to feel the want of the troops which Khalid had taken with him to Syria, and applied to Omar for reinforcements. The need of the Moslems on the Euphrates was serious indeed. The Persians, slaying or blinding most of the royal princes and princesses, had, by a process of gradual attrition, reduced the number of possible claimants to a considerable extent, and at last only two princesses remained to contest the vacant throne. One was victorious through the aid of Rustam, Governor of Khorasan, who having blinded the less fortunate rival, made his client, the Princess Buran, Queen Regent of Persia.

For a moment there was a lull in the intestine quarrels of the Persian nobility. Rustam, who seems to have been a man of some ability, rapidly reorganised the Persian forces, gained over many of the lords who had surrendered to Khalid, and with their assistance prepared to expel the invader. In the face of this determined advance Mothanna was obliged to retreat from

Irak, evacuate Hira, and fall back with his weakened army on the desert border, there to await the succour he had asked Omar to send him.

These forces under the command of Abu Obayd [1] soon reached Mothanna, who was thus enabled to set out upon the reconquest of the lands he had been compelled to abandon. At first, success attended the arms of the Arabs. By superior strategy they contrived to attack and defeat in detail two Persian columns which were operating in the vicinity of Hira, with the result that the Persians retired and the native Arabs once more submitted to the Moslems. However, Rustam had by no means exhausted the powers at his disposal, and was able to despatch from Madain a formidable array of troops to arrest the Moslem advance.

So far as may be judged from the accounts given, this army was the most effective which the Persians had yet gathered together. Rustam himself, having lately come from Khorasan, had probably brought in his train numbers of Turks and other warlike inhabitants of the north ; he had further contrived to enlist the services of many of the mountain tribes from the Kurdish highlands above the Zab, and the presence of a number of elephants in his line of battle suggests that he had also gathered together allies from India and the East. The fact that the standard of the King of Kings was borne before the troops would lead us to infer that the army of Rustam was no longer a mere local levy, but in fact an Imperial army such as had enabled Khosrau to march to Constantinople.

The command of this great army was entrusted to a Persian general named Bahman, who proceeded immediately to that point on the Euphrates where the Moslems were encamped. The two armies were separated by the great river, which, however, was traversed by a bridge of boats at the very point where the two forces were stationed. On his arrival Bahman immediately sent an embassy to Mothanna and Abu Obayd, asking them whether they dared cross and give him battle, or whether they chose to hold their ground and await him. Abu Obayd, succumbing to that instinct of chivalry which Islam was doing so much to stifle, accepted the Persian challenge. In spite

[1] He must not be confounded with Abu Obeyda.

of the appeals of Mothanna, he ordered the Moslems to pass over and deploy along the Persian front.

In the ensuing battle he reaped the reward of his folly, for the Arab horses would not face the elephants confronting them, and the Moslems were obliged to fight on foot at heavy odds. The Persians charged home in overwhelming numbers, and the Arabs, deprived of the accustomed support of cavalry, were unable to oppose the attack. Abu Obayd himself was crushed under the feet of an elephant, and his ghastly fate was the signal for a general panic; the bridge gave way under the crowded weight of numbers, hundreds leapt into the river itself, and only the division of Mothanna held its ground. This gallant band did much to minimise the disasters of the day, by keeping the Persians back until the bridge had been repaired, when they retired in good order.

The followers of Abu Obayd dispersed and fled, and Mothanna, with his remnant of some 4,000 men, represented the total effective forces of the Moslems in Irak. He could only hope to retire in good order before the advancing Persians, and the fruitful province, which yesterday was within the jurisdiction of Omar, was once more engulfed in the Persian monarchy. But Mothanna was not pursued, for hardly had the din of battle subsided than news was brought to Bahman that yet another revolution had burst out in the capital; that a revolted governor, named Firuzan, was at that moment threatening Madain with a large army; and that his master, Rustam, was in imminent danger. The Persian army hurriedly retraced its steps eastward, and Mothanna and his weary men were granted a respite.

Omar in Medina hastened to despatch reinforcements to his hardly-pressed lieutenant in the east. Tribesmen who, on account of their former perfidy, had hitherto been denied the right of joining in the holy war, were now granted the inestimable privilege of dying for the faith. Thousands flocked to the sacred standards, eager to spread the doctrines they had lately rejected; not only did Bedawi auxiliaries pour in from the south to sustain the Moslem army, but two important tribes from northern Mesopotamia[1] also threw in their lot with Mothanna

[1] Strangely enough they had come southward to sell horses even as do the Shammar and Anazeh to-day.

and abandoned the Persian cause and the Christian religion for ever. Reanimated by this unlooked-for increase of his power, Mothanna once more advanced towards the Euphrates, where he was informed that a Persian army was encamped. This latter force was under the command of one of the princes of the house of Mihran and had been despatched from Madain by Rustam, who, having compounded with his rival, was once more in power.

Elated by their former victory, the Persians crossed the Euphrates and attacked the Moslems; but Mothanna was now fighting on his own ground, and supported by masses of irresistible cavalry, he completely shattered his audacious enemy. The Persian prince was slain and his army put to flight, the fugitives being pursued to the very walls of Madain. The victory gave the Moslems an opportunity of which Mothanna readily availed himself. Hira was reoccupied and a campaign of reconquest undertaken.

The mobile bands of horsemen scoured the whole of the lands between the two rivers, burning, destroying and sacking the dwellings of such as had played false to the cause of Islam. The radius of these two operations extended from the Khabur on the north to Tekrit in the east and the swamps in the south. Within that region the whole country was systematically cowed, converted or destroyed. So crushing had been the defeat of Mihran, that for nearly a whole year the Persians were unable to assemble an army or take any offensive measures to interrupt this fatal industry of their enemies. They were obliged to remain inactive, not on account of the incapacity of their leaders, the poverty of their exchequer, or the unreadiness of their troops, but because no Royal King of Kings could be found to mount the empty throne. The pride of the nobles and governors was such that no one of them would obey any save a Royal Prince of the true line; their provinces were wasted, the enemy bearded them in the very suburbs of Madain, but still they would not bend their stiff necks to even a temporary dictator or regent.

At the last moment a princess, who had been a concubine of Shahriyar, that unfortunate son of Khosrau the conqueror, announced that she indeed had borne a son, but that he had been reared in secrecy and had thus escaped the knife of the

executioner. The Persians grasped at this opportunity of reconstituting the monarchy and, perhaps without making a very strict enquiry into the reputed heir's antecedents, eagerly acclaimed him as King of Kings. Under the leadership of Yezdejird III, Persia was once more united and outwardly, at least, presented a very fair resemblance of her former strength and power.

Omar realised how serious an enemy was now confronting the army of the faithful in the East, and decided to push on every man at his disposal to its assistance. To make matters worse, Mothanna, who had steered the faithful through so many storms and difficulties, fell sick of an old wound and was unable to continue in command. Omar was at first inclined to proceed to the frontier in person, but, on being dissuaded, appointed Sa'd the Emir, who fought by the Prophet's side at Ohod, to take charge of the army of Irak.

The new commander followed the lines which Mothanna had indicated as those calculated to achieve success. In a rich and crowded country irregular hostilities carry with them a host of unbearable miseries; in spring the crops are trampled under foot, in summer they are fired, the villages are wrecked, the towns bankrupt, communications destroyed, canals and engines of irrigation suffered to decay, and the unhappy population confronted with utter ruin. These tactics were pursued by Sa'd the Emir with relentless severity. By incessant raids he galled the Persians and irritated their subjects; by harassing their smaller towns and cutting up their lesser detachments and continually acting on an irregular offensive he kept them in a continual state of alarm, curtailed their powers of concentration, disorganised their system of supplies, and mutilated their interior commerce.

Eventually the King of Kings decided to marshal his army and strike one blow at his elusive enemy. He concentrated his forces at Madain, placed them under the command of Rustam, and directed the latter to march upon Kadesiya, near Hira. If we required proof of the effectiveness of the policy of Sa'd, we should find it in the fact that the chief difficulties which the army of Rustam experienced on its southward march arose from a want of supplies.

During the whole period of the Persian advance the Arab bands withdrew without giving battle, concentrating at Kadesiya, where Sa'd himself was encamped. At a slight distance from this point Rustam halted, perhaps hoping that the invaders would retire into the desert. It soon became evident, however, that Sa'd was ready to give battle, and the Persian general prepared to attack him. Although it had been by slow and painful degrees that the army from Madain had made its way into the territory of Hira, it nevertheless presented a formidable array when it finally assembled. Historians have computed its numbers at perhaps not less than 120,000 horse and foot, assisted by a body of 33 armed elephants.

Both Rustam and Sa'd appeared to realise the gravity of the struggle on which they were about to embark. For several days before serious hostilities were commenced, messengers, not of peace but of war, passed frequently between the camps of the opposing armies; but at length the field of battle was decided upon and both forces prepared for combat. At the last moment a sudden illness confined the Emir Sa'd to his bed. Reluctantly he gave Khalid, the son of Arfata, command of the troops and bade him lead the faithful to victory.

The contrast presented by the two armies must have been striking in the extreme. On the one side stretched the glittering array of the Persians centred around Rustam, who, after the ancient eastern custom, surveyed the field from the eminence of a throne of gold raised upon a portable daïs. To his right and left the barons and lords of Iran headed their squadrons and cohorts of retainers and men-at-arms; while above the whole mass of the army towered the huge dark forms of the elephants, bearing on their backs wooden castles filled with marksmen.

Opposite stood the ragged gathering of the Moslems, now carefully marshalled in a disciplined and ordered host—every thousand commanded by a veteran Emir, every hundred led by a trusty Shaykh, every ten captained by a selected warrior, every individual man imbued with a fierce and determined desire to conquer or to die. Up and down the ranks marched poets, singers, and reciters of the Koran, urging and encouraging men already almost mad with excitement. The warlike words of the Prophet mingled with the swinging verses of the desert

bards; the extemporised couplets of the moment rang out amidst the mighty words of prayer and the shrill treble of the Arab's charging war cry.

The final issue commenced with Homeric duels between champions of either party, which eventually merged into a close engagement. From morning till even the two armies remained locked in close fight. When evening came neither side had gained an appreciable advantage, and the weary troops drew off to snatch a season of rest, the Arabs somewhat disheartened by their horses' fear of the elephants, the Persians holding their ground unconquered.

With the morning of the second day the uncertain battle recommenced with redoubled fury. By way of revenge for the panic which the elephants had spread among the Arabian horse, herds of camels covered with streaming rags and cloths were driven against the Persian cavalry, whose steeds took fright and fled in consternation. Still no decided advantage was gained by either side. The Persian nobles held themselves with superb courage, bearding the Moslem leaders in the hottest press of battle, driving back the wildest charges of the frantic Arabs at every point in the field; but if the Persians repulsed the attack of their assailants, so were they themselves hurled back when they ventured to the assault. Once more the sun sank to rest, and again the warriors mutually withdrew from the undecided field.

With the first streak of the dawn of the third day the equal and bloody contest commenced again. The Moslems attacked with redoubled fury, and a new-found confidence seemed to inspire them. Soon it was seen that they had received an unexpected reinforcement, that hosts of fresh horsemen and infantrymen added further power to the terrible onsets of the preceding day. This fresh assistance for the Moslems was composed of that division which Khalid had carried into Syria on the eve of the battle of the Yarmuk, and which Omar had despatched to the help of Sa'd the moment it could be spared from Syria. By some freak of fate the lethargy of the Persians had allowed this division to be withdrawn from Irak for the final undoing of the Romans, and now the fatal inactivity of Heraclius permitted its return to complete the destruction of the army of Rustam.

The Persians struggled on throughout the day, but the fates fought against them. They held their ground, but were unable to do more. At length the elephants were driven forward as a last resource in hopes of breaking the Moslem line. The huge beasts carried all before them, till one of them, maddened with the pain of a wound, became uncontrollable and rushed up and down between the two armies. The remainder, stricken with panic, followed suit; and for a time the action was suspended, both sides standing dumfounded watching the careerings of the infuriated herd. The distracted brutes, after vainly striving to find an exit from the battle, hurled themselves against the Persian line. Breaking the ranks of their masters, they trampled a deadly way through the army, and with one accord dashed across the Euphrates and vanished down the road to Madain, leaving panic and disorder behind them. The Moslems charged upon the broken Persian ranks, and once again the army of Rustam endeavoured to repel the attack.

Darkness came, but with it no lull in hostilities. Throughout the livelong night the hoarse confused noise of battle continued—the rumbling of the distant charge, the roarings of the Emirs, the yelpings of the Bedawi warriors, the fierce calls to God for assistance, the neighing of the stallions, the shrieks for mercy and the howls of savage triumph, seemed all the more horrible in the impenetrable obscurity. Till dawn the issue of this hideous strife was yet uncertain; but the first glimpse of morning light served to show the Persians fleeing, broken, panic-stricken and utterly routed, the valiant Rustam himself slain, the army of Yezdejird dispersed, and Irak a defenceless victim at the feet of the conquerors. The land of Babil, which for a thousand years had been in Elamite hands, now fell back once more under Semitic dominion.

### § 3. *Syria Again*

The strategy of Omar was simple but effective. So long as the army of Irak was confronted with a superior or at least equal enemy, the Emirs in Syria were ordered to act solely on the defensive. It was by the practice of this carefully matured scheme that the Caliph was able to transfer the division of Khalid to the

threatened lines of Kadesiyah at the very moment it was wanted. When Irak had been finally conquered it was decided that Abu Obayda should once more assume the offensive, and according to Omar's instructions the first blow was struck in the north.

Abu Obayda, realising that Khalid was one of the ablest of the Moslem generals, gave him a command worthy of his capacity in spite of the Caliph's jealousy. When Abu Obayda and Khalid set out with their combined forces for the siege of Homs, very slight opposition was made to their advance. The town was soon closely blockaded; its surrounding territories ravaged; Baalbak, the ancient shrine, was captured; and the whole of the Orontes valley south of that point placed under contribution.

The Romans had had nearly a year to recover from the shock of the disaster of the Yarmuk, but seemed to have made little use of their opportunity. Heraclius, who had set up his headquarters in Edessa (Urfa), apparently attempted to organise an army in Mesopotamia; but the news of the multitudes of Moslems pouring into Irak, and the sight of parties of their scouts and forerunners appearing on the line of the Khabur, filled him and his officers with indecision.

Seeing no prospect of assistance, the citizens of Homs yielded on the same terms as Damascus, and Khalid and Abu Obayda swept on toward Berea or Aleppo. In a short time the whole of northern Syria surrendered to the Moslems, the municipalities of Restan, Salamiya, Hama, Shaizar, and Ma'ara apparently making their own terms and conditions without reference to their former rulers. When the two Emirs reached the head of the Orontes valley, Khalid was despatched to seize Kinnisrin, while Abu Obayda marched toward the coast.

What must have been the feelings of the Moslems as they descended from the heights of Lebanon and viewed for the first time the white-walled cities of the sea? The vast expanse of the Mediterranean, broken only on the horizon by the faint pencilling of the mountains of Cyprus, must have presented a marvellous picture to eyes whose only view of the sea had been confined to that hideous gulf which lies between Aden and Akaba, where the leaden waters are penned in by scarlet rocks and the burning day is only succeeded by hot and sultry night.

On the coast the last remnants of the Roman Empire made some vain efforts at resistance, but opposition was vain. Jabalah, Latikia and Antarsus were carried by the Moslems, sword in hand, and another Power came forth to share the ships, the merchandise, and the markets of the central sea.

Khalid marched on Kinnisrin, where he was met by Roman troops and Arab levies of the people of Ghassan ; the Romans he defeated, but the Arabs dispersed without fighting. Kinnisrin itself surrendered after a brief resistance; the walls were demolished, the principal buildings destroyed and the people given their lives, terms easy enough when we remember that they were dictated by the ruthless Khalid. Immediately the inhabitants of a neighbouring city, Hadhiriya, begged to submit on the score that they themselves were Arabs, who—poor souls!—had been forced by the wicked Romans to oppose their countrymen. In a few days the many surrounding Arab tribes who had settled on the borders not only surrendered but immediately accepted Islam ; others deferred this last concession perhaps for a few more years.

The Roman power was now reaping the full harvest of punishment which Constantius and his successors had earned by their ineptitude. For nearly two centuries, Arab tribes had been allowed to plunder, settle or wander over northern Syria, paying in return a few taxes and much disloyal services ; now the conquering Moslems found among them converts and supporters in the heart of their enemies' country.

Having completed the conquest of the coast Abu Obayda proceeded to Aleppo, accepted its surrender, and marched thence down upon Antioch. The beautiful city of vice, luxury, and sophistry had by this time recovered from the depression and ruin caused by the great earthquake and the Persian armies. Possibly its honourable position had freed it from much of the taxation which had been imposed so heavily elsewhere to defray the military expenses of the Empire. At any rate, when it surrendered to Abu Obayda it was wealthy and prosperous, and contained a large but unwarlike population.

While the Moslem and Arabian tide swept further and further north towards the Taurus, Amr, Yazid, Shurahbil and Mo'awia proceeded with the conquest of Filistin, where hitherto the Romans

had been left undisturbed. In this region the invaders found some new and strange allies in the Samaritan Jews, who had been sorely persecuted since the days of Justinian. Detesting Christians and other Jews alike, these fierce and untamable villagers were ready to give the invaders every assistance in their power, either as spies or guides or even on the field of battle.

If the Romans were unable to offer any successful resistance in northern Syria, it was not to be expected that they would be likely to hold their opponents in check in Palestine. Place after place surrendered; at Ajneddin the only Christian field army that remained was destroyed, and at last Jerusalem alone of all the inland towns of Filistin remained untaken. The Holy City was well garrisoned, and its position was of such natural strength that famine was practically the only weapon of the besieger. The inhabitants knew full well that there was no prospect of assistance; the Moslems perhaps appreciated that the town could only be taken at infinite cost. The situation was one that invited mutual concession, and the people of Jerusalem agreed that they would surrender on certain specified conditions, the chief one being that the town should be handed over to the Caliph Omar in person.

Information of this offer was carried to Medina, and Omar set out to receive the submission of the holy places. Wrapped in a coarse *abba* cloak, the Caliph was mounted on a camel, with a sack of barley, a bag of dates, a wooden platter and a water-skin as his sole equipment, and a solitary slave his only escort on a journey of some 600 miles. When near his journey's end he was met by his Emirs, who were robed in silk, and mounted on richly caparisoned horses. The old Shaykh scrambled from his camel, and snatching up stones hurled them at his generals. "Dare you show yourselves to me dressed in such clothing?" he roared. "The clothes conceal our arms," muttered the chieftains, perhaps insinuating that they were not accustomed to such reprimands, or perhaps excusing their extravagant appearance. Omar paid no heed to their words and advanced immediately to meet the Christian delegates. Accompanied by them alone, he proceeded to the holy city, where he was met by the Patriarch Sophronius and accepted the formal surrender. The Christians were allowed full rights of freedom in the

exercise of their religion, the churches all being left in their hands untouched, and a very moderate tribute being the only tax imposed upon them.

While Sophronius was exhibiting the various points of interest of the city to the conqueror, he led him to the church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was midday and the hour of Moslem prayer was due, so the Patriarch ordered a mat to be brought into the church; but Omar would have none of it, and prayed outside the porch. With sly humour he secretly told the Patriarch that nothing would have prevented his Emirs and followers from praying where their master had prayed himself. Does not this circumstance show how refined and sensible is the mind of an Arab, even in the person of this fierce Caliph Omar with his bag of barley and wooden platter?

The fall of Jerusalem perhaps stung the rulers of Constantinople to a fresh effort; or possibly the gallant defence of Caesarea, which still held out untaken, shamed the Romans into a second expedition. Worn out by the fatigues of a long and arduous life, Heraclius had retired to Constantinople and was unable to take the field; but his son Constantine, inheriting the Imperial spirit of his father, undertook one last attempt to wrest Syria from the Moslems. He landed off Antioch with a large army of Egyptians and soldiers from Asia Minor, and the second capital of the East opened its gates with joy to receive them. Vast numbers of troops marched westward from the regions of Masius, Adiabene, and Sinjar to reinforce the newly-landed army, and apparently the Roman and Persian garrisons and local Arabs of the south-eastern frontier made common cause to repel the northerly advance on the part of Sa'd.

For Constantine the situation was extremely favourable. Abu Obayda's forces were scattered throughout Syria, he himself was at Homs; Khalid with his division was at Kinnisrin; one half of Yazid's army was besieging Kaisariyah, the other was holding Damascus; while the troops of the other Emirs, broken up in detachments of varying sizes, were engaged in overaweing the lately captured cities and districts.

Abu Obayda's first care was to order Khalid to fall back and join him at Homs. This retirement had an immediate effect

upon the Bedawin of North Syria, who but a year before had abandoned the defeated Romans to join the victorious Moslems. Although they had excused their former perfidy on the ground that they could not fight against their kith and kin, they now bodily disavowed their allegiance and newly-found religion to assemble under the banners of Constantine, doubtless on this occasion because of their undying devotion to Christianity and the Empire which stood a very good chance of being on the winning side.

With his army now largely increased by these somewhat unstable reinforcements, Constantine marched boldly upon Homs, where Abu Obayda decided to hold out until Omar, whom he had kept fully informed of the course of events, could afford to send assistance. Omar, who should certainly rank among the foremost strategists in history, decided to relieve the pressure on Abu Obayda by an indirect method. He ordered Sa'd, whose forces were in the vicinity of Madain, to harass and vex Mesopotamia; his troops were broken up into three distinct divisions, the first to march northward along the banks of the Tigris towards Adiabene, the second along the Euphrates in the direction of Kirkesya, while the third, a column of horse, was commissioned to proceed directly across the desert to the relief of Homs.

The result of this brilliant combination was disastrous for Constantine, who was suddenly confronted with the news that the Moslems were masters of Kirkesya, Hit, and Tekrit; that on the Euphrates the Romans had been driven north; that on the Tigris they had been cut off from the Persians; and that the army of Irak was preparing to devastate northern Mesopotamia and Adiabene. The consequence of this intelligence on the army of Constantine was calamitous, for the officers and soldiers and tribal levies from the east were filled with apprehension for their homes and hastened away to defend them. This sudden withdrawal of a great part of the Roman army placed the besieged forces of Abu Obayda and Khalid on terms of equality with the blockaders.

Although Khalid knew that Omar was marching in person with reinforcements from Medina and that the relieving column from Sa'd was wellnigh due, he persuaded Abu Obayda to sally

forth and attack Constantine. This decision was by no means so rash as it might appear, for the North Syrian Arabs, who had already changed sides twice in the course of the campaign, had of course noticed the departure of the Mesopotamian troops and began to wonder if it were not possible that Mohammed was indeed the Prophet of God. In the end, these incorrigible traitors distinguished themselves by a third act of treachery: the moment the army of Abu Obayda and Khalid issued from Homs to give battle to the remaining troops of Constantine, the Bedawin of North Syria went over to the Moslems *en masse*. The Romans retired disheartened to Antioch, where the majority contrived to re-embark on the fleet; but others, less lucky, fled northwards and were continually pursued until they reached Cilicia. Thus ended that dominion in Syria which had lasted since the days of Pompey.

### § 4. *Mesopotamia*

That the final expulsion of the Romans from Syria was attributed by the Moslems to the valour and generalship of Khalid inflamed the rancorous enmity which the Caliph bore to the "Sword of the Lord." Omar detested the hero of the holy wars with an undying hatred, and now that he could dispense with his services he decided to vent his spleen upon him by commanding his final degradation. The fact that Khalid had out of the immensity of the spoils set a considerable but perhaps just portion as his own share, was seized upon as a pretext for putting this order into execution. Khalid was bluntly accused of peculation and bidden confess or deny his guilt; the proud desert chieftain refused to answer, and to the horror and grief of his troops he was paraded before them bareheaded and pinioned. In spite of the efforts of Abu Obayda he was sent back to Medina in disgrace, there to be stript of his possessions, and publicly reviled by Omar. That the Caliph could thus abuse his authority in the name of impartial justice throws a vivid light on the marvellous discipline of the first Moslems. The councillors and elders protested, Khalid ably defended himself; but Omar was stern and inflexible. "I humbled Khalid," quoth Omar, "not because I hated him, but because men gave praise to him for the

victory and forgot God. God alone is the author of victory, neither Khalid nor another." "O Omar," replied one of Khalid's kinsmen, "thou hast sheathed the sword of the Lord, thou hast humbled the chosen of His prophet, and now thou risest up seeking to justify thyself. May the Lord not hearken to thy excuses!" Omar did not reply, but the decree remained unaltered, and Khalid was destined never to lead the Moslems again.

As though in judgment of this crime[1] of the Caliph, his newly conquered territories in Syria were ravaged by a fearful plague and Hejaz was stricken by famine. By these cruel strokes, the choicest warriors of Islam died of the sickness, and Arabia, the sole source of recruitment, was plunged in the deepest misery; 25,000 of the troops in Syria sank beneath the pestilence; but perhaps the heaviest blow of all was the loss of the Emirs Abu Obayda, Yazid, and Shurahbil, who were carried off along with their followers. Omar was so apprehensive of the results of these calamities that, regardless of the dangers to which he would have exposed himself, he decided to set out for Syria, and could not be dissuaded until one of his followers bade him remember the words of the Prophet: "Shun the land of the stranger where there is a pestilence, but abandon not your home in the hour of visitation, neither run into danger which is afar nor flee when it approacheth." Presently the plague abated in virulence, the dearth in Hejaz came to an end, and since the Romans had not had the means to attack their foes during the hour of distress, the Moslems were once more at liberty to resume their conquests.

It is interesting to discover from the writings of the Byzantine historians themselves that, after the second battle of Homs, the governor of northern Mesopotamia had compounded with the Moslem generals, and had purchased the safety of his province by acknowledging an annual tribute as due to the Caliph. This fact in itself is suggestive of the forces of disintegration at work in the declining Empire. It is true that the conduct of the governor of Edessa in making private terms

[1] Since no man had ever a keener sense of justice and knightly chivalry than Omar, I think his offence in this instance was as unpardonable as the fall of Lancelot.

with the Caliph's Emirs was reprimanded by the Emperor, and that one of the last public acts of Heraclius was to degrade him from his office; but beyond discharging one officer and sending another in his room, the government of Constantinople could do nothing. It could despatch neither an army to uphold the dignity of the Empire nor an embassy to treat for terms.

The Moslems waited in vain for the stipulated tribute, and when it became apparent that it would not be paid, Iyadh[1] was commanded to invade and annex northern Mesopotamia. The Bedawi population of the plains neither welcomed nor opposed the invaders. The conquest of Irak had shown them how little mercy had the Moslems for emigrant Arabs, and they profited by the lesson; some fled northward, others yielded to tribute, others accepted the faith of the prophet, but not one drew a sword or let fly an arrow in defence of the Empire. As for the cities, a brief resistance was made at Dara and Constantine; but the remainder of the towns followed the example of Edessa, where the Roman governor surrendered on condition that his troops were given quarter.

In this brief campaign that vast gap between Irak and Syria which is occupied by the fertile plains and rich pastures of northern Mesopotamia fell under the dominion of Omar and served to complete the circle of the Moslem Empire, the radius of which was now so rapidly increasing. Within a line drawn from Antioch to Diarbekir, from Diarbekir to Mosul, and Mosul to Halwan, the population, whether Kurdish, Armenian, Aramean, Greek, Syrian, Persian or Arabian, admitted the supremacy of Omar; and from every section converts or taxes were forthcoming. For those who chose to abide by their ancient religion, there were toleration and protection; for those who chose to accept the new one, honour, wealth and promotion.

## § 5. *Egypt*

At this juncture it is well to consider the condition of the lands which surrounded the new-born Empire of the Caliphate.

[1] The Emir who had failed to capture Jaumat Jandal.

To the north lay Armenia in a state of dim confusion which it is at this date impossible to unravel. On the eastern limits of that distressful and divided land, belated Persian officials, native princes, intriguing bishops, fanatical monks, and fierce mountain tribesmen under treacherous nobles, struggled together in unimaginable complexity and seemingly purposeless disorder. To the west, affairs seem to grow less chaotic; but our knowledge is equally vague. An Armenian noble, bearing the title of governor of Roman Armenia and holding a faint jurisdiction over an ill-defined tract of country, is the most plausible suggestion that can be brought forward. Asia Minor itself was still under the hand of the Emperor of Constantinople, but it must have been a hand rapidly losing the power of making itself felt. Without the aid of historians we can imagine the general depression and misery which must have prevailed in the surviving provinces; we can picture the roads falling into decay, the declining commerce, the savage bands of vagrant soldiers fleeing from Syria, the grass-grown ruins of public buildings in the towns destroyed during the Persian invasion, the daily apprehension of the villagers and townsfolk of the raïding parties of Arabs who swarmed through the Cilician gates into the fertile tableland north of the Taurus.

While Egypt was even more disunited and disloyal than Syria had been in the days preceding the Arabian conquest, there were indeed then, as there are at this very moment, two Egypts—the Egypt of the rulers and the Egypt of the Egyptians; the Egypt of the Greeks and the Egypt of the Copts; the Egypt of the orthodox and the Egypt of the Monophysites. In the north, the Greek cities of Alexandria and Pelusium contained a Greek population, an Imperial army and an Imperial governor; by the power of the Emperor these military and commercial colonies dominated the whole of the land of the Pharaohs. The swarms of brown-skinned cowardly slaves who dwelt on the banks of the upper Nile, and inhabited the teeming cities of the Delta, reluctantly obeyed the commands of the foreign generals and officials appointed from Constantinople, who dwelt in the towns on the coast; but the hatred which the Copts bore their governors was undisguised. When the armies of Khosrau had marched across the Sinai peninsula the Egyptians had wel-

comed them. During the Persian occupation the native sectaries had retaliated on the orthodox Greeks who had formerly persecuted them; when the Persians withdrew, the Copts had suffered again at the hands of their opponents, whom the presence of the troops of Heraclius once more placed in power.

Owing to this distinction between the rulers and the ruled, the province of Egypt provided a bulwark against the Moslems no stronger than did the broken fragments of the Sassanian Empire in the East, the anarchical territories of Armenia in the north, or the impoverished provinces of Asia Minor in the north-west. Thus there was in no single quarter any force which could obstruct the Moslem advance; and since the whole of the lands occupied by people of Semitic or Arabian stock had fallen under the sway of the Caliphate, it is little wonder that Omar and his Emirs should begin to look further afield for souls to save, plunder to carry home, or territories to annex.

The first region beyond the natural Semitic limits to be attacked by the Moslems was Egypt; but strangely enough its conquest was not undertaken in the methodical manner which had distinguished the invasions of Irak, Syria and Mesopotamia. Late in the year 19 A.H. a party of not more than 4,000 men were despatched across the Sinai peninsula under the command of the Emir Amr-ibn-el-Asi; but whether this force was intended merely as a raiding party commissioned to plunder the wealthy regions of the Delta, or a reconnaissance in force, or an actual expedition of conquest, is open to doubt. Amr advanced to 'Ain-es-shems, brushing aside a native army under a native leader which endeavoured to prevent him laying siege to a great fortress on the banks of the Nile named the Egyptian Babylon. Yet, although Omar reinforced the small army of Amr with two further divisions of 4,000 men, Babylon did not fall for seven months, *i.e.* 20 A.H., 640 A.D., at the end of which period it was carried by assault.

With no more than 12,000 soldiers at his disposal, it would have been impossible for the Moslem Emir to have accomplished the conquest of the country, had it not been for the fact that the native Egyptians, heartily disgusted at the treatment which the Greeks had meted out to them on their resumption of power, extended to the invaders a welcome even more open than that

which they had formerly given to the Persians. Although not ready to accept the religion of Islam, the native officials, peasants, and soldiers sided with the Moslems; and the hated Greeks soon found themselves closely blockaded in Alexandria by an army which derived every assistance in the way of money and provender from the purses and storehouses of their own discontented subjects, while Constantinople was too weak to be able to send by sea an army to their assistance equal to those overwhelming streams of reserves which were ever thickening the ranks of the army of Amr.

After an obstinate struggle of fourteen months' duration Alexandria was evacuated by the Roman troops, and the Moslems entered upon their long tenure of mastery in Egypt. The Christian natives, who had welcomed them readily, bowed their necks to the new yoke, and the gradual obliteration and decline of the Christian faith in the Nile valley began.

### § 6. *Iran*

Leaving Amr in possession of Egypt we must now turn once more to the Moslems in the east, who, after having completed the conquest of Irak, were looking towards the mountains of Jibal, eager to follow on the heels of the retreating Persians. The first advance against the Iranian lands proper was directed upon the province of Ahwaz, where the Moslems again found allies in the heart of the enemy's country in the shape of the Bedawi tribe of Koulaib-ibn-Wail. These wanderers had for many years been a thorn in the side of the Persians and now flocked to the Moslem standards. A simultaneous insurrection and invasion proved more than the Persian governor could cope with, and he abandoned the eastern cities of the province.

Meanwhile a large Moslem army had been quartered at Bahrein under Ala-ibn-Hadrami. This Emir had prayed that he might not serve under Sa'd on account of a private feud, and Omar, who desired above all to avoid dissensions, had ordered him to remain in reserve on the Arabian littoral of the Persian gulf. When, however, the Emir and his men heard the news of the plunder and success of their comrades in Irak, they began to pine for release from the tedious inactivity of their situation.

Ala-ibn-Hadrami, still unwilling to place himself at the disposal of his rival, yet anxious to engage in the campaign, conceived the bold scheme of sailing with his army from Bahrein to invade the opposite shores of the Gulf, which were the limits of the province of Fars. If there was one single portion of the Sassanian Empire in which the spirit of patriotism still lurked, it must have been in that region, the traditional centre and home of the Persian monarchy; and there indeed the Moslems might have expected to be met with a valour and enthusiasm equal to their own. Recking little of this danger, and without waiting for the permission of the Caliph, Ala-ibn-Hadrami put his plan into execution; but it was not long before he reaped the reward of his temerity. Hardly had his troops penetrated inland before they were met by a formidable army which drove them back to the sea.

Omar's punishment of his foolhardy lieutenant was characteristic. "As for thee, O Ala," ran the reprimand, "thou shalt not return to Bahrein, but in future thou wilt serve under Sa'd. If I knew of anything in the world which would cause thee more annoyance than to have to obey Sa'd, assuredly I would have ordered thee to do it."

The repulse of this expedition seems to have given the Persians no little encouragement, for Hormuzan, the governor of Ahwaz, began to concentrate troops with the object of re-capturing the cities he had abandoned during the previous year. Omar, although he had no wish to extend his conquests, was evidently of opinion that in aggression lies the true science of defence, and he accordingly commanded the Emirs of Irak to despatch an expedition to the south-east in order to frustrate the intentions of the Persians.

Taken by surprise, the Persians fell back upon Tuster, where the Moslems besieged Hormuzan and his army. At the end of seven months the town was carried by storm, and Hormuzan, who still held out in the citadel, surrendered on condition that he should be carried to Omar in person. He made this stipulation because it had been reported that he had slain one of the most pious of the Moslem Emirs, El Bera, with an arrow from his own bow.

The Persian noble's request was granted, and he was des-

patched direct to Medina to be judged by the Caliph. When Hormuzan arrived at the squalid capital he arrayed himself in the most sumptuous robes, and putting his golden crown upon his head requested his captors to lead him before the King of the Arabs, saying with some pride "that only Kings might judge of Kings."

The Moslems led the Persian Prince into the courtyard of the mosque, where they bade him sit down. He noticed an old man in a ragged cloak asleep in the shade with his face against the wall. "Who may that fellow be?" exclaimed the prisoner. "It is the Prince of true believers," answered his guards. Presently the old man awoke, and rubbing his eyes peered at the rich dress of the captive. "Strip him of these heathen garments and dress him in the clothing of a Moslem," commanded Omar; and after Hormuzan had been divested of his finery and arrayed in an old linen shirt he was ordered to speak. "In the language of one dead or one living?" quoth the Persian. "In the language of the living," answered Omar. "Then you grant me my life," replied Hormuzan, "since you say I am to speak as one living and not as one condemned to death." "God forbid!" cried Omar. "Verily thou shalt die for having slain El Bera." "May I drink before I die?" asked the Persian, "for I am thirsty." The Caliph ordered a goblet of water to be set before him. "You promise not to slay me until I have drunk this water?" cried the prisoner. "I promise," said Omar; whereupon the wily Persian dashed the water on the ground, saying, "Now thou canst not slay me, since I can never drink that which hath been sucked up by the dust." "Neither this trick," thundered Omar, "nor any other juggling fraud shall save thee, for assuredly I will do thee to death." "What will save me?" cried the Persian in despair. "Say," answered the Caliph, "there is no God but God and Mohammed is His Prophet." Hormuzan eagerly repeated the words; whereupon his possessions were restored to him, and he was granted an annual pension.

The fall of Tuster, and the consequent danger of the province of Fars, obliged the Persians to make one last effort to save their Empire; it was now no longer a province that was in danger; the very existence of the Persian dominion was at stake. At

Nehavend the final forces of the Persian Empire were gathered under the leadership of Firuzan, one of the last generals of Yezdejird ; and in spite of the continual sequence of disasters, the Persians had perhaps greater hopes at Nehavend than they had ever indulged in before. Sa'd, the Emir who had won the battle of Kadesiya, had been recalled ; the Moslems were now far from their own country ; while they themselves had not only overwhelming numbers in their favour, but were established in a country with which they were well acquainted and whose population contained no elements disaffected to their cause. But at Nehavend the Persians met with no better chance than at Kadesiya. Their last army was destroyed with horrible slaughter, Firuzan was slain, and the final reserve treasure upon which Yezdejird had relied for the future was seized among the spoils ; and the last Prince of the Sassanian line, seeing that all was lost, fled north to die a miserable and obscure death at the hand of a peasant.

The final crash of the Persian Empire came perhaps at an opportune moment for Christendom ; for when the last eastern barrier to Mohammedan aggression fell at Nehavend, a flood-gate was opened through which the roaring tide of Islam could pass and spend its first vigour upon Asia, instead of recoiling upon Europe and engulfing the whole of the west. This huge force had to find an outlet in one direction or the other. The savage tribes of Bulgaria and Thrace might at that date have been induced to accept Mohammedanism with as much ease as were the similar tribes of Turks, Kurds, and Lurs in Iran ; while the crumbling strongholds of Heraclius, the barbarian rulers of Middle Europe, and the wasted lands of Gaul might have offered as disorganised a resistance to the concentrated efforts of the conquerors as did the satraps of Iran. The student will perhaps realise how much Europe owes to the battle of Nehavend, when he considers that the distance from Medina to the province of Jurjan, which the Moslems conquered within a year of the destruction of the Persian army, is about the same as that which separates Antioch from Paris.

Once the royal army of the Persians had been destroyed, the conquest of Iran resolved itself into a series of wars against the various provincial governors, and within two years Jurjan,

Tabaristan, Azerbaijan, Kuhistan, Seistan and Mokran had been annexed, and depended for their government on Medina.

In twenty-three years the Moslems had conquered an Empire bounded on the north by the Caspian, on the south by the coasts of Aden, on the west by the Sahara, and on the east by the Hindu Kush.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SAINTS

643–660 A.D. 23–40 A.H.

THAT the energies and particular characters of three very different men should have been the cause of the rise of the Arabian or Moslem dominion, is a peculiar and striking fact which cannot be passed by without comment. The movement was initiated by the strange, confused, and violent earnestness of Mohammed, developed by the simple, yet courageous policy of Abu Bekr, and fulfilled by the rigorous and inflexible discipline of Omar. Each of these remarkable leaders seemed to supply in turn the deficiencies of his predecessor at the very moment they were required: the uncontrolled and incoherent genius of Mohammed was corrected by the plain and simple qualities of Abu Bekr, the gentleness of Abu Bekr by the hardness of Omar. The Prophet inspired the Moslems with enthusiasm; the first Caliph turned their energies into appropriate channels; the second regulated and curbed them at the very moment when, intoxicated by success, they threatened to lose cohesion in their action and purpose in their aims. Indeed, it would be impossible to say to which of these three arbiters of destiny Islam was most indebted for its permanent establishment among the religions of mankind.

In the twenty-third year of the Hejira the Empire of the Moslems had been immovably fixed over the region which we roughly described in the preceding chapter, and it would perhaps be of some assistance if at this point we endeavoured to portray a particular description of its general condition.

At Medina we find the headquarters of the militant powers of the new creed, and in Medina we find the capital of the new

Empire. As a town Medina itself had perhaps not increased to a very great extent in point of material wealth and splendour: Mohammed had never had the opportunity of improving its condition; Abu Bekr had been too busily engaged in affairs of the moment to think either of himself or the city; while Omar discouraged ostentation and display to the utmost of his power, and always maintained the strictest simplicity in his own household. Indeed, so rough and uncompromising was the second Caliph in his attitude towards luxury, that many a girl in Medina would not marry him or enter a household where, as they said, boiled camel and barley bread were the usual fare, and long prayers and black looks the only form of conversation.

The Caliph and the leading chieftains probably dwelt in bare, unfurnished barns; the mosques were perhaps little more than bare courtyards; while around the city, and on its outskirts, there possibly lay a confused mass of mud dwellings, tents and hovels wherein dwelt the crowds who waited for the return of their relatives from the wars, or were preparing to depart to swell the ranks of the armies at the front. Hence one may infer that the city of Medina in the days of Omar perhaps bore a considerable resemblance to that huge mud village of Omdurman which was destroyed in 1898.

But if Medina was but a kind of depôt where the austere Caliph and his advisers marshalled armies, distributed plunder, prepared plans of campaign, collected munitions of war, and received, docketed, and checked the loads of the booty-laden caravans, other cities had grown up within the Moslem Empire where affairs bore a much less Spartan complexion.

In Irak the towns of Basra and Kufa had been founded by the generals of the Moslem leaders. These two cities were not mere standing camps and collections of barracks such as one might expect a barbarian invader to set up, but were veritable towns with fine buildings and bazaars. The craftsmen and architects who had built for the Persians now sold their art and cunning to Arab Emirs, and in spite of the reproaches and admonitions of Omar the palaces and buildings of the Persians were reproduced as residences for the conquerors. The Arabs who entered Irak seemed to part with their traditional simplicity the moment they left the desert. Intelligent and naturally

refined in mind, they appreciated the beauties and delights which they found in the Mesopotamian cities.

The cultured Arabs of Hira who embraced Islam helped to hasten the fusion between Arabian religion and Persian civilisation. It was by this strange concurrence of the seeds of ancient wisdom with the receptive though virgin soil of the minds of the desert men that a fresh civilisation was given to the world, destined in a short time to blossom forth into a magnificent growth of philosophy, architecture, poetry and science.

Further east, in Persia proper, it is not easy to trace the exact effect or the methods of the Arabian conquest; but continual revolts and continual repressive expeditions suggest that the Persian spirit died hard, and that the conquerors were regarded rather as armed garrisons than as settlers and colonists.

In northern Mesopotamia and Adiabene, however, it is evident that the Arabian leaven among the population facilitated the final subjection and conversion of the land. There the Christians, long subject to Persian dominion, offered no obstacle to the advance of the Mohammedan religion, which by a gradual process probably engulfed the Manichaean and Zoroastrian rural population and the nominally Christian Arabs of the Jazirah, leaving the Christian colonies of the cities untouched.

As regards the region around Diarbekir and the southern slopes of the Taurus, the historians are vague and uninforming. They afford us little insight into the condition of the country, and there is not the slightest material for forming even an indefinite idea as to what were the preponderating elements in the population.

In northern Syria the Arabs were apparently amalgamating rapidly with the Greeks and nondescript people of the coast, adopting their civilisation, enquiring into their studies, examining their philosophies, availing themselves of their arts, and taking up their system of government, just where the Romans had left them.

In the districts around Damascus and in Palestine itself, the dividing line between the people of the country and the Arabians themselves was so slight, that, beyond the departure of the Roman officers and their troops, little immediate change took place in the aspect of the land.

In Egypt the population, accustomed to above a thousand years of servitude, were confronted by the alternatives of remaining Christians under a system of government similar to that which they had hitherto endured, save that it was perhaps less rigorous; or of becoming, by the abandonment of their ancient faith and language, the equals of their new masters. I suspect that it was this latter temptation to which the weaker vessels of Egypt so rapidly succumbed; and possibly they yielded the more easily on account of the reaction that must have set in when the orthodox persecution of the Romans gave place to the tolerant contempt of the Moslems.

It was over such an Empire as this that Omar was reigning in the twenty-third year after the flight of Mohammed and Abu Bekr from the pagan nobles of Mecca. His dominion was firmly established: each new province was held by colonies of the tribesmen who had conquered them; each of these military colonies was absorbing or being absorbed by the local population; the fires of Christianity in the west, of Zoroastrianism in the east, and of Sabianism and Manichaeism in the centre were gradually paling before the fierce glare of Islam, and converts, both sincere and venal, clustered in swarms around the new revelation. The Copt, the Persian and the Greek proffered their skill and learning to advance and assist the faith which had been hitherto supported solely by Arabian valour and conviction. Omar was still a ragged Arab such as any of those who had roared in triumph at Badr or fled in dismay from the field of Ohod; but among his officers there were Grecian scribes and clerks who kept account in their own tongue of the revenues of the Syrian lands, while dark-eyed Persians and brown-skinned Egyptians professed the unity of God in broken accents and drew the pensions to which their acceptance of the Koran entitled them. One by one the ties of blood and tradition were dissolved by the magic of the Prophet's word, and a new nation appeared in Asia, Arabian in tongue, and dominated and bound together by Arabian religion, but containing all the diverse capacities inherent in the peoples of which it was composed.

The last years of Omar's reign were devoted to the final welding together of the strange materials that had come into his hands. He regulated the finances by establishing a

permanent commission for their administration; he curbed the independence of his distant generals by obliging them to report to him with constant regularity, checking the accuracy of their information by the advices of a host of spies and informers whom he set to watch upon their movements; he fixed the revenues by settling a regular series of taxes which he imposed upon arable land, upon the wealthy, upon Moslems, upon Jews, upon Christians, upon handicraftsmen, upon tradesmen, and upon artisans, each in their degree. To accomplish the unity of the Mohammedan commonwealth, the Caliph seems to have availed himself of every means that came within his reach. His justice was that of a patriarch, his financial administration was borrowed from Persia, his secret service perhaps from Byzantium, his military organisation a careful development of the tribal system of the desert.

That the man who could achieve these wonderful deeds should have been once but a poor hungry camel-herd proves that he was indeed one of the great ones of the earth; and as he stalks through the pages of history one is filled with awe and respect, and, if one happens to know the Arab nation, with perhaps a feeling of suppressed amusement.

One day, in the tenth year of his reign, he entered the mosque at Medina to lead the daily prayer, the Moslems standing in ranks awaiting the first word of the Commander of the Faithful. There was a slight movement as he passed through the lines, a man rushed forward, struck two or three savage blows at the tall figure of the Caliph, and fled from the building. Omar reeled, and fell to the ground mortally wounded. In the confusion the assassin escaped; he was, it is said, a Christian carpenter who had sworn revenge for some slight and private grief. As soon as he could speak, Omar called for four of the elders among the first companions of the Prophet, Zobair, Sa'd-ibn-Wakkas, Ali and Othman. He counselled them to choose his successor from among themselves, and he prayed them each in turn to beware against favouring his own tribe if he were elected. Having thus accomplished his first duty, he asked who it was that struck him; and when he learned the truth, he cried: "Praise be to God I die a Martyr's death, and do not fall by the hand of a Moslem." His last request was that he might lie by his master's side, if

indeed Ayesha, the Mother of the Faithful, would permit it. As he lay sinking on his bed he heard a confused noise without the door. On enquiring what it was, he learned that many of the people desired to see him. "Let them enter," he murmured. "Let not the men stand without the gate." So until his spirit departed the Moslems slowly passed through the room to take one last glance on the face of the dying ruler.

After some haggling, Othman was elected as Caliph and reigned supreme as Vicar of the Prophet and Commander of the Faithful. At the date of his election he was already an old man not only in years but in mind. He had accepted Islam not perhaps as a saving faith and sure guide to heaven, but rather to confirm his own fortunes and those of his family. His local patriotism was stronger than his enthusiasm for the creed he had adopted, and his first acts were those of a partisan rather than a statesman or ruler. He replaced the old and tried officers of Omar by creatures of his own family and tribe, and to maintain the allegiance of the rabble he increased the military pensions and rewards by a tenth.

At first this alteration of the policy of the Ruler of Islam had but little effect on the gradual expansion of the militant Empire. Expeditions still flowed out in every direction carrying all before them, either subjugating the countries they entered, or gutting them of all the movable wealth they contained. Between the years 23 and 28 A.H. conquest of the littoral extending from Alexandria to Carthage snatched another province from the Roman Empire and Western civilisation, and at the same time gradually imposed the tenets of the Koran upon the savage Berber tribes of the Sahara. In Armenia an army of 12,000 men spread destruction through the land and returned southward laden with plunder. In Khorasan the advance guards of the true believers were in contact with the hordes of the pagan Turks, while behind them incredible multitudes of Moslems were engaged in crushing, destroying, or uprooting the last signs of Persian organisation, religion and tradition. Off the coasts of Palestine, Mo'awiya, the governor of Syria, swept the seas with a fleet which sailed unchallenged to Cyprus and Rhodes, laying waste the chief places of those islands and plundering the towns on the neighbouring shores of the main-

land; while from Antioch smaller expeditions continually broke through the Cilician gates to raid and ravage the Christian provinces and return.

Mo'awiya, being a relative of Othman, was permitted to retain his office as governor of Syria; but elsewhere the nobles of the Koraysh, who had grudgingly accepted the religion they now sustained, were promoted in the room of the Emirs who had served under Omar. Soon the dissatisfaction of the people began to find vent whenever occasion offered. In Kufa the murmurings assumed the form of a conspiracy. In Egypt a seer named Abdallah-ibn-Saba began to preach the doctrine of the second coming of the Prophet in the person of Ali, saying that Ali was the true Caliph and Othman a usurper.

In Medina matters reached such a pitch that the Moslems assembled unashamed in the Mosque for the purpose of censuring their ruler; but so long as Mo'awiya remained in the city, his presence assured peace. After his departure for his province, however, Othman was hooted in the streets and forced to remain in his house. At length he was persuaded to propitiate the infuriated people by publicly promising to investigate and redress their causes for complaint. This momentary concession stayed the trouble for a time, but within a year the Kufans and Egyptians were back in Medina with a greater following than before. None of the promises had been fulfilled, and this time they meant to make an end of the question.

Again Othman temporised, but the interception of an unlucky despatch exposed the falsity of his professions of good faith. Othman was stoned in the Mosque, and on fleeing to his house was closely blockaded by his enemies. In vain he sent for soldiers; his troops were marching to victory in far distant lands. In vain he called for Ali, Talha, Zobayr and Amr; they would not come—they said they were engaged. Surrounded by a few friends and dependants, Othman endeavoured to appease the infuriated people, but the only answer to his entreaties was the cry of "Abdicate! Abdicate!" He stubbornly refused, and the siege of the Caliph's house began. The outer walls were carried after an obstinate resistance. Mohammed, a son of Abu Bekr, rushed in foremost among the throng and seized the Caliph by the beard. "O Son of Affan,"

shouted the youth, "where are the apostate Emirs and accursed ministers now? What help can they afford you?" "O my son," murmured Othman, "verily Abu Bekr would not have rejoiced to see my white beard in the hands of his son." Overcome with remorse the young man fled from the room; but others with sterner hearts soon surrounded the old Caliph. "Abdicate!" they cried, "abdicate of thine own will"; but Othman stretched out his hand, holding a Koran, saying: "I will only give unto God that which only God hath given to me." A knife was plunged into his throat, and the blood spurted on to the sacred book, marking the passage "Truly God sufficeth, truly He sees and hears all things." So, while his armies were conquering the world, perished Othman the Caliph in his 82nd year.

The news spread away from Medina and met the hosts of relieving troops coming from Egypt, Irak, and Syria to Othman's assistance. When they learned of the fate of the ruler they immediately returned to their several homes, a first sign of that kind of anarchy which was to be the future bane of all Moslem countries. "Le Roi est mort," cries the Oriental, "and now let the devil take the hindmost, for this is indeed the deluge."

The moment the aged Caliph had expired beneath the blows of his assassins, a curious lull came over the angry mob of Medina. The fanatics, it is true, would not have the wretched man buried in the common cemetery; but beyond the insane fury of a few, public wrath speedily cooled down and gave place to perplexity in view of the necessity of choosing a new Caliph. Ali was favoured by the people of Medina and the fanatics of Egypt, Zobayr was backed by the visitors from Kufa, Talha by the townsmen of Basra. All those chiefs who had winked at the rebellions against Othman, who had refused to assist him in the hour of stress, who had watched the besiegers gradually penetrate into his house, now began to grow uneasy, fearful and suspicious. Each in his heart desired the Caliphate, each dreaded the jealousy of his comrades, each loathed the idea of any but himself being elected. Ali, who was weak in the face of a political crisis, hesitated in the most hopeless way. He longed to be Caliph; he had permitted Othman to be slain without mercy on this account; yet he had no fellow feeling with the fanatics who had slain his

rival ; he desired the good repute of his fellow companions of the Prophet ; he dreaded their enmity, yet he had not the wit to obtain their friendship. The followers of Zobayr and Talha were too few in numbers to warrant them putting foward their claim publicly. Consequently the days rolled on and no Caliph was chosen. At last the people of Medina themselves began to insist on the nomination and selection of Ali, who protestingly yielded to clamours that he had himself perhaps originated. But before accepting the headship of the faith, Ali, who knew full well the troubles that awaited him in the future, insisted on being accepted by all the chiefs in the first instance, Zobayr and Talha being obliged at the dagger's point to acknowledge their rival's supremacy.

The moment Ali had been made Caliph he exhibited very plainly how unfit he was for the post. It would have been difficult for a strong man to have maintained order in a faction composed of so many different parts, but for a weak character like Ali it was impossible. In a short time he involved the greater part of his Empire in inextricable confusion. He enraged Talha and Zobayr by refusing them the governorships of Basra and Kufa ; he permitted the whole of Othman's family and fellow tribesmen to scatter over the land proclaiming the martyrdom of the late Caliph ; and finally he endeavoured to supersede no less a person than Mo'awiya, the governor of Syria. This act was madness in itself, for Mo'awiya was virtually an independent monarch, governing both wisely and well a kingdom in which he was not only popular but firmly established.

Soon the results of Ali's rule became visible. Talha and Zobayr having conspired with Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet, set out for Basra with a strong following, intent upon stirring up rebellion in Irak. In Egypt the people broke out into fierce faction fights, some favouring Ali, some the friends of Othman. In Syria Mo'awiya, perceiving that peace with Ali was out of the question, stirred up the people against the murderers of Othman and their abetters by every means in his power. Sermons were preached, poems descriptive of the sad event recited, and Othman's shirt all dabbled with blood exhibited to the excited soldiery.

Ali, who had no great knowledge of strategy, seemed to follow no consecutive plan in his attempt to deal with the troubles with which his Empire was assailed. He followed Talha, Zobayr, and Ayesha into Irak. There the advantages of the situation were pretty equally divided; half the country population seemed to take one side, half the other, while Kufa declared for Ali and Basra for the rebels. At the battle of the Camel the issue was decided finally in Ali's favour. Ayesha was captured, while Zobayr and Talha were slain. But the rebellion in Irak was by no means the most serious danger with which Ali was threatened, the condition of Egypt and the power of Mo'awiya in Syria being far more important. Ali was filled with hesitation. He could not keep order among his people, nor yet please the religious enthusiasts without irritating the adventurers.

At length the Caliph decided upon hazarding a battle against the Syrian forces of Mo'awiya. The two armies met at Siffin, near Rakka, and the army of Ali would have gained the day but at the critical moment the fanatics of Irak refused to fight the soldiers of Syria, because the latter tied Korans to their lance heads. Unable to force his disorderly hosts to fight, Ali endeavoured to compromise. He proposed a court of arbitration, with two judges and a jury of eight hundred persons, formed from among the supporters of himself and Mo'awiya. This suggestion was accepted by the Syrian party, and the case was tried; but no judgment was come to, the parties separating with angry words and recriminations.

But although he gained no advantage by diplomacy, Ali lost more by admitting the idea of arbitration than he had ever hoped to win. In the first instance Mo'awiya had an excuse for styling himself Caliph, while many of the most sanctimonious of Ali's supporters immediately took umbrage at his worldly conduct. "God," said they, "can alone decide any matter"; and from this assumption they proceeded to argue that no man had a right to govern, judge, or give orders of any kind. These uncompromising sectaries broke out into a rebellion in the vicinity of Kufa and Basra, and kept Ali engaged for many a day in the task of quelling them. While the fanatics kept the Caliph busy in Irak, Mo'awiya was able to

work his will in Egypt, which he soon annexed by the help of Amr-ibn-el-Âs, who had gone over to the Syrian party early in the day.

Ali's affairs continued to grow worse from day to day. His party contained every irritating material that had been swept into the fold of Mohammedanism : the fierce plunderer, the worldly lawyer, the haughty tribal Shaykh, the lolling-tongued martyr, jostled side by side in the ranks of his army with scant friendship or harmony. And Ali was weak ; he could not rule as Omar or Abu Bekr had ruled before him ; he could not even lie and temporise as Othman had done ; he could but curse his fortune and beat hand upon hand as he heard of Mo'awiya's daily prowess, how he had raided to Mosul, swept into Hejaz, or finally conquered Egypt. At last Fortune grew a-weary of this Caliph who sat in Kufa racking his wits, while his rival carried all before him ; and it chanced that a certain devotee believed that Ali was condemned to die.

One day as he was going to lead prayers, a wild-eyed man struck down the Commander of the Faithful in the mosque ; and as the sword was poisoned, Ali died of the wound. Here begins that long catalogue of murders and assassinations undertaken by Moslem enthusiasts for a spiritual end.

# CHAPTER XIV

## MO'AWIYA

660–679 A.D. 40–60 A.H.

THE moment Ali expired the private quarrels, which had smouldered among his advisers, broke out into open dissensions. His sons, Hasan and Husein, were destined to a series of unhappy vicissitudes. Hasan, the elder, was selected as Caliph in his father's place, but, while inheriting some of that political timidity which had proved his father's bane, he lacked completely the personal prowess and signal valour which had so distinguished the adopted son of the Prophet on the field of Ohod. He fumbled and delayed, and Mo'awiya marched southwards. Helpless and hapless, Hasan yielded to Mo'awiya and acknowledged his supremacy, swore fealty himself, and even agreed to retire with his brother and his people to Medina, where he was to receive a modest annual pension. But Mo'awiya would take no risks. In his eyes, the facts that Hasan was incompetent, that he lacked ambition, that he yielded meekly, were not valid excuses for prolonging his life. Soon after the luckless exile reached Medina he was poisoned by his wife, who in turn was slain by her employer, the Syrian Caliph.

Now securely seated in the place of power, Mo'awiya proceeded to unify and organise the distracted dominions which had fallen under his control. The son of Abu Sofian accomplished the task he had set himself with rare ability and wisdom. He dealt with each problem which presented itself with the exact measures which were likely to achieve his ends.

While engaged in ordering the interior of his dominion, Mo'awiya had also to take into consideration the danger which was always attendant on the early Caliphs, in the shape of the numerous

hosts of hot-blooded, eager adventurers, who longed for war and foreign conquest, and whose desires, if not fulfilled, naturally impelled them to mutinous thoughts. Mo'awiya did not hesitate to make use of these turbulent spirits. He despatched them to Khorasan to conquer the hordes of savage Turks who dwelt beyond the Jihun. The student may gain some insight into the nature of the almost incredible vigour of Islam in its early days if he does but reflect that the Mongol, Tartar, and Turkish hordes of the north-east—whose raids had been the terror of Persians, Goths and Romans—were now being violently attacked, dispersed and conquered in their very homes. While the more intractable were induced to fight for God and his Prophet on the banks of the Oxus, the governors of Egypt were encouraged to continue the western conquest of the African coast, and day by day the standards of the Prophet were carried nearer and nearer to the coasts of the Atlantic.

In the Mediterranean the fleets of Mo'awiya swept through the Greek Islands unchallenged, and sailing through the Dardanelles disembarked an army destined for the siege of Constantinople. For six years the Moslems beleaguered the capital city of Christendom, and for six years the valour of the Romans and the stout walls of the city held them at bay. If the Romans fought at the Yarmuk with desperate courage, they held the walls of their last retreat with unconquerable determination. The flight of the Greek Christians from Syria had provided the capital with a garrison, just as the Persian occupation of Egypt had provided Heraclius with a field army. It appears indeed quite a common factor in the destiny of the city, that she should be saved almost from destruction by the result of a misforture which of itself might have been expected to have levelled her with the dust.

The diversion which saved for Europe the fuel for the lamp of the Renaissance came from an unexpected quarter. The Lebanon mountains were barely subdued, and the dominions of Mo'awiya did not stretch above three days' march north of Antioch. In the Amanus and Taurus mountains dwelt a race noted since the days of Pompey for its independence and military qualities. The Isaurians had ever been a thorn in the side of settled government; and now, under the new name of

Mardites, they reappeared as untamable and aggressive as before.

While the whole world was shaken by the noise of Moslem success, Mo'awiya found himself suddenly confronted with the dangers of war, defeat, and rebellion within a bow shot of his capital, Damascus. The sturdy mountaineers of the north, led by Roman nobles, had invaded the Lebanon, and, while keeping closely to the mountains, were carrying disaffection and mutiny into the very heart of Syria. If the mountains of Syria were once occupied by the enemy, a Christian rebellion, a desertion of hundreds of venal converts, and the probable loss of Jerusalem would have been the logical outcome of such a situation.[1]

Mo'awiya knew how to be bold in retreat, just as he knew how to be unhesitating in advance. The moment the invasion ot the northern mountaineers was seen to be real, the Arabs were recalled from Constantinople, the war with the Romans came to an end, and a treaty was concluded with the Emperor, by which Mo'awiya agreed upon a truce of thirty years' duration and the payment of an annual tribute of three thousand pieces of gold to the Imperial Exchequer.

Once the treaty of peace had been signed, Damascus and Moslem dominion in Syria was relieved of the fear, but not of the presence, of the Mardite mountaineers. The Arabs were unable to displace these invaders, who clung closely to the inaccessible regions of the Lebanon mountains; but since their funds of money and supplies from Byzantium had been cut off, it was not difficult to limit the scope of their operations.

By conceding this treaty Mo'awiya had established his authority securely within his Empire, made peace with his only formidable rival, and employed the full attention of his more dangerous followers in distant expeditions in Asia or Africa, where defeat entailed no loss and victory served to increase his prestige. The Caliph was now in a position to devote his mind to the fulfilment of a project which had long occupied his thoughts—the foundation of a permanent dynasty with his favourite son, Yazid, as his lawful successor.

The Omayyads lacked not for great men, but Mo'awiya, either from parental weakness or political intuition, seems to have con-

[1] Disaffected Bedawin used frequently to take refuge among the Mardites.

sidered that the elective method of choosing the Caliph was impracticable and fraught with danger to the State. Though it had been successful in the cases of Abu Bekr and Omar, the fall of Othman and the failure of Ali must have suggested to so wise a man as Mo'awiya that a dynastic system, based on filial succession, was the only scheme which could endow the new-born Empire with political stability. Consequently, as soon as the external and internal affairs of the Moslem state were sufficiently calm, the Caliph proposed to the world that after his death Yazid, his son, should reign, and that all men should recognise in him the incontestable heir of the Caliphate. The suggestion seems to have appeared so reasonable that in no single one of the conquered cities or newly-founded Moslem colonies was there any protest or objection raised.

At Medina, however, where men still talked and thought almost as they had done before the battle of Badr, this proposal met with opposition and anger. Husein, the son of Ali, Abdallah, the son of Omar, Abdallah, the son of Abbas, and Abdallah, the son of Zobeir, each refused to acknowledge Yazid's right of succession. Each one perhaps imagined he stood some chance of seizing the reins of power on the death of the reigning prince; each one could count on a goodly following of discontented adventurers and greedy relatives; each one seemed to think his chance of success too valuable to be lost by taking an oath of allegiance. Mo'awiya accepted the situation with some philosophy, and forbade his officers to molest the recalcitrants, saying that he would reason with them himself. The Caliph then visited Medina in person and vainly endeavoured, by arguments and cajolery, to bend the four obstinate nobles to his will. Had Mo'awiya lived a little longer he might have gained his object, but within two years of the issue of the Edict of Succession the great Omayyad Caliph died at Damascus in the very act of admonishing his son and heir to continue his policy of clemency, diplomacy and justice.

In Mo'awiya we pass a great figure in the history of the world. He was one of those liberal, far-seeing, even-minded statesmen, whom at rare intervals the stern methodic religion of the Prophet puts forth. His chief and dominant characteristic as a ruler was a perfect balance of mind, coupled with an extraordinary nice-

ness of discrimination, which told him when it was opportune to use force, cruelty, mildness, argument, compromise, or boldness.

He had the ability to use any weapon, and he had the gift of selecting the weapon he ought rightly to employ. Reared amidst wild religious enthusiasm and passion, placed in supreme power when the forces of Moslem Arabia were just to be let loose, Mo'awiya was just and kindly in the treatment of his Christian and Jewish subjects. He seized his place by force, yet he never exhibited a desire to make despotic use of his position. The raw Bedawin might indulge in the most insulting personal remarks concerning his person in his presence without danger; his councillors might criticise his actions without fear. Although an Arab of the desert, he exhibited no contempt for the civilisation he had conquered; and although a supreme leader and controller of men, he never exhibited that vanity or overbearing pride so common in Oriental rulers.

Before leaving Mo'awiya to turn to the inglorious reign of Yazid, we should do well to note that the spiritual governance of the Mohammedan world died with Ali; henceforth religion was in its essential meaning divorced from practical government. Now it was for the reader of the Koran and the preacher of the law to tell the Caliph what was compatible with Islam; the Caliph himself ceased to be in virtue of his office either a seer, a saint, or a devotee, and was a monarch ruling over a vast Empire and controlling the destinies of thousands of non-Moslem people.

## CHAPTER XV

### YAZID

679–680 A.D. 60–61 A.H.

THE great Prince was dead, and in his room his son Yazid was lord. The new ruler was weak, a man of sports and chase, clothed in soft garments ; but still the dead Caliph's hand pressed upon the people whom he had governed. They did not scorn his son, but were ready to accept him as their master. When the messengers rode forth into the newly-conquered provinces to proclaim the accession of Yazid, no voices were raised in protest ; no mobs assembled in angry buzzing multitudes to disown the Commander of the Faithful ; no shrewd, scheming generals announced themselves masters of the districts they governed. Yazid succeeded his father in peace, and the sky overhead appeared cloudless save for one tiny speck which hung over Medina.

Near the tomb of the Prophet still dwelt the four whom Mo'awiya had in his wisdom spared. Husein, the son of Ali, nursing his rage against the family which had cozened his brother to his doom ; Abdallah, the son of Zobair, thinking of his father's lost opportunity ; Abdur Rahman, the son of Abu Bekr, perhaps mourning over the corruption of the age ; Abdallah, the son of Omar, burning with indignation that one of Omar's stock should bow to the house of Abu Sofian—these alone in all the world refused to accept Yazid as their commander in war or their Imam in peace.

Yazid trembled before them : he had no ready resource, no quick bribes, no governorships, no gentle words ; the weapons of his father's armoury were denied him. Yazid the weak could

only think of violence. He bade the governor of Medina slay the recusants in case they remained obstinate.

Walid, the governor, seemed loth to obey his master's commands. He endeavoured to persuade, but failing, was slow to act; so slow indeed that the four escaped to Mecca, before any attempt was made upon their lives. Once in the Holy City, Abdallah, the son of Zobair, showed himself the stronger of the malcontents. Husain counselled quiet; but Abdallah seized the office of leader of prayers in the Temple, gained over the Meccans to his side, and hunted the governor out of the town. Enraged at the failure of his officers, the Caliph sent Amr, another son of Zobair, with troops to seize his rebellious brother. Amr was defeated, captured and beaten to death. Yazid's first action as a Prince had lost him the Ka'ba. Abdallah was master of Mecca solely by force of character and arms. Husain, dreading to venture greatly, refused to lend a helping hand. He stayed, mewed up in his house, waiting for a favourable turn of events, knowing that his opportunity, if it ever came, lay in Kufa. The rebellious leaven of the Kharijites, with which the Kufans were so strongly imbued, had only been subdued by Mo'awiya, not destroyed. To them Husain was a keen reminder of the days of disorder and wild fanaticism of his father's time.

Letters of invitation were sent from Kufa to the son of Ali, begging him to come and declare himself lord of Irak and rightful Commander of the Faithful. Husain's wisest friends and councillors bade him beware of the fickle townsmen who lured him on for private ends; but Husain would not heed them, and set out for Irak with a small guard of 40 horsemen and 100 foot. This tiny army he had the folly to encumber with his whole family, his sons and wives and daughters.

On this perilous enterprise Husain risked not only his own life but that of all his race. The day that Husain set forth a strange event occurred in Kufa. The clumsy intrigues had been reported to Yazid, who ordered immediately Obaidallah-ibn-Ziyad to leave his post of governor of Basra and instal himself in Kufa before Husain should arrive. Obaidallah entered Kufa, veiled and surrounded by his escort, letting it be thought that he was Husain himself entering the city. The deluded people followed Obaidallah to the city hall, and called

upon the governor to yield up the place to the son of the Apostle of God. The governor hesitated; the people clamoured the louder. The governor endeavoured to appease them, crying from the house-top: "Begone, son of the Apostle, I would not that a son of Ali should come to evil on my account." Suddenly the hooded figure, who was supposed to be Husain, plucked aside his mask, and thundered on the door of the palace, crying: "A curse upon Husain and a curse upon ye all, open the gates." The rabble, amazed, fled in dismay; the doors of the palace opened, and Obaidallah took charge of Kufa. His first action was to seize the persons of the conspirators of Husain's party. The mob, recovering its courage, surrounded the palace and demanded their release. By way of reply, Obaidallah paraded the two guilty men on the roof. The throng without roared for the prisoners to be given up, a scimitar flashed in the air, two staring heads were flung to the people below, and Kufa was subdued and the cause of Husain irreparably lost.

As soon as the town had been quelled, Obaidallah ordered an Emir named Omar-ibn-Sa'd to proceed with a strong force of loyal soldiers to the desert frontier to await Husain, who, all unconscious of the disaster, was pushing across Nejd towards the borders of Irak. The Emir had little stomach for the business in hand, and although determined to obey his orders, endeavoured to warn Husain of his impending fate, and so persuade him to retreat. A Bedawi was sent out to inform the rash pretender of his danger; but when Husain learned of the fall of Kufa he would not turn back. "Where can I go," he cried, helplessly, "with my family and little ones?"

Omar came upon the forlorn group near Kerbela and arrayed his four thousand men against the devoted band of one hundred and forty. Husain endeavoured to parley. Omar, overjoyed at some excuse to avoid performing his odious work, sent back to ask Obaidallah whether he might accept a conditional surrender. Obaidallah's reply to his Emir was short and peremptory: "Have I sent thee as an ambassador? Attack, or thou shalt be disgraced." With a heavy heart Omar took the field once more, but again acceded to Husain's demand for one day's delay. Obaidallah grew impatient, and sent a second officer named Shamir to see that his orders were carried out. Shamir was

about to command the troops to set on, but even he acceded to Husain's request that the final conflict be postponed until the morning of the following day. Shamir was as hard-hearted and ruthless as only the Arab can be when decided on an act of wrong; therefore, in giving Husain a night of grace, he did not hesitate to make fate doubly sure by sending a party to cut off the camp of the pretender from the waters of the Euphrates.

While the enemies were encircling the camp, Husain prepared for death. There is something terrible and beautiful in this last night which the son of Ali passed on earth. Without his tent, alone in the darkness, he furbished his arms, singing of his coming death, of the wickedness of his foes, of his valour and his heavenly reward. One of his children, who lay sick within, heard him, and began to cry, and the women burst out into weeping and lamentation. Husain calmly reproved them. "Weep not," he said, "lest the enemy, hearing us, rejoice." Then, as if confounded by his misfortune, he cast his eyes to heaven, crying: "O God, thou knowest that they have broken their oath; punish them, O Lord."

When the better part of the night was spent, he called his followers to him and freed them of his service. Death, he said, was for him alone; but no man stirred from his place. "O son of the Apostle, and what should we say unto Him on the day of resurrection?"

Husain, with a sigh, dismissed them to their posts. Presently a Bedawi stole silently into the camp to offer the doomed man a camel and guidance to a tribe where he could hide in safety; but Husain, whom the approach of death infused with a grand nobility, replied: "And what of these? To leave them would be dishonour; to live without them, life a burden." The Bedawi vanished into the night, and Husain was alone. Presently he slept and in his dreams he heard the Prophet say: "Weep not, O Husain, to-morrow thou shalt be with me." The morning dawned and found Husain and his companions at prayer, and the enemy ranged around them in battle array. The son of Ali mounted a camel and approached the army of Kufa. He called upon them to accuse him of any crime he had committed against them; he reminded them of his father and the Prophet; he asked them if they had not written to him begging him to come. He

implored them to have mercy on his family and companions, lastly crying: "Did you entice me hither with oaths of allegiance to slay me?" Under the stern eyes of Shamir and Omar, however, the Kufans were adamant. "We are weary," they cried, "of thee and thy oaths of allegiance." Husain returned despondently to his following, and Shamir, standing at Omar's side, exclaimed: "Dost thou hesitate? Lay on!" Omar, remembering the governorship promised him in Khorasan, seized a bow and let fly an arrow at a venture, crying, "Bear witness, I have stricken the first blow"; and, as if it were a signal, the battle (if such the piteous slaughter may be termed) began.

The sun rose high in the heavens and scorched the land. Husain's men were parched with drought and soon fell a prey to the darts and spears of their enemies, dying miserably, within sight of the river from which the cruel Shamir had cut them off. Among them Ali, the eldest son of Husain, perished before his father's eyes; and at this fearful sight the wretched man gave way and fell along his son's body, weeping and groaning as though his heart would break, while from out the tents ran Zaynab, the lad's mother, shrieking in despair. Indeed, the camp must have presented a heartrending spectacle. Of the one hundred and forty only five companions remained, leaning upon their spears, their armour hacked, their weapons broken, their eyes dulled with despair of life and misery of burning thirst: in the middle the mangled corpse of Ali, with Husain and the mother weeping beside it in agony of grief. From within the tents came the wailings of little children and the sobbing of women; in the distance, the cool, yellow waters of the Euphrates; near and about, the dry desert scrub; while around, in a shameful circle, stood reluctant yet unpitying ranks of the relentless enemy. The agony was long drawn out.

The five surviving men were slain; but Husain was still untouched. He mounted a horse, and faced his foes alone. A swift arrow brought his charger to the ground. Husain rose, only to sink to the earth again, overcome by thirst. Still the enemy hesitated to strike. It was too foul a sacrilege against the laws of God and honour for any one to raise a hand against this helpless man.

Husain tottered towards the tent. There he found a little child weeping. It was his son Abdallah, not above a year old. He seized the infant in his arms; again a bow twanged and the child was hushed, its head transfixed with an arrow. Husain set the little body on the ground. "Verily," he cried, "verily from God we come and unto Him we return." Then, while the whole army of the enemy watched in rage and shame, he began walking slowly toward the river alone. Suddenly the harsh voice of Shamir was heard: "Curses on you! let him not drink! he is dying of thirst! If he drinks he will live!" Again an arrow rang through the air, and Husain was struck in the mouth. The blood flowed in torrents from his lips as he dragged the barbed shaft away. Omar ran towards him to end the tragedy. "Thou art come to kill me," murmured Husain; and the Emir, falling back ashamed, turned to his men, shouting: "Why stand you idle?" The soldiers rushed in, and Husain the son of Ali was dead.

. . . . . .

The deed was accomplished, and all that remained to be done was to despatch the women and Ali, the only surviving son of Husain, to Yazid, at Damascus. The Caliph was in his hall of audience when Zahr, the messenger of victory, presented himself before the council. "Woe is thee," cried Yazid. "What news bringest thou?" Zahr replied: "Know, O Yazid, that God hath given thee victory. Husain and his companions chose battle, and in battle we overthrew them. They hid themselves in the fastness, as the doves hide from the eagle, and in the fastness we slew them even to the last. Their treasures have been rifled, their garments soaked in blood, their cheeks made grey with dust. The sun withers them like dry sticks, the winds scatter their members, the vultures and buzzards are their only companions." And so saying the messenger threw the shrivelled head of Husain upon the ground. A murmur of pity passed through the ranks of the councillors. Yazid was overwhelmed with fear at the action of his officers. No excuse could wipe out the blot which had stained the house of Mo'awiya; no regrets could take from the dead man the aureole of martyrdom. Yazid repented when repentance availed him nothing.

The boy Ali and the women were sent to Medina, as a place of honourable exile; but the news of the crime of Kerbela spread to every town, to every encampment, and to every village in the Moslem dominions. To this day men gash themselves in frantic grief in remembrance of the day of Moharrem, and to this day the House of Islam is divided against itself.

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE ZENITH OF THE OMAYYAD CALIPHATE

680–692 A.D. 61–73 A.H.

THE evil consequences of the massacre of Kerbela were not long in making themselves shown. The people of Medina, already horrified at the action of the Caliph's officers, were informed by a deputation which had lately visited Damascus that the Commander of the Faithful was irreligious, drunken, dissolute and prodigal. The scandal of Kerbela now seemed doubly disgraceful, and the outraged citizens turned from the unworthy prince in disgust and declared themselves free of his rule. In Mecca the rebellious Abdallah announced that he was Commander of the Faithful, and ruled the city as Imam and Caliph.

Yazid, however, could still reckon on his father's organisation, and an army was despatched from Syria for the conquest of Hejaz and the holy cities. Medina was taken and sacked, and Mecca was soon closely besieged. Abdallah, the rebel, could not have held out for long. The army of Syria was equipped with the weapons of the infidel, the slings and ballistae hurled pots of blazing bitumen into the Ka'ba, and Mecca was on the brink of destruction ; but, just before the final assault was ordered, came the news of Yazid's death and a general confusion of affairs at Damascus—confusion worse confounded, amid which the student may scratch his head in dismay, and curse Oriental history as a diabolical invention intended for the torture of criminals and the production of imbeciles.

Before endeavouring to relate some of the events which occurred during this period of upheaval, it would be as well to review the conditions of the dominions which lay under the

hands of the conquerors. In Arabia we find but little changed; that country was, in fact, reverting to its original condition. Mecca, the chief commercial and religious centre, was ruled by the grandees of the Koraysh, who never seemed to have realised that anything which occurred outside their petty affairs could be a matter of importance.

Syria was rapidly becoming accustomed to the new régime, and had already schooled her new masters in Roman methods of government, taxation, finance, and the transaction of public business. Egypt, still a province, remained as before a land of slaves and tyrants; superficially language and religion were changing, but beneath the surface Egypt was the Egypt of old: the Egypt of the Greeks, of the Ptolemies, and of Rameses, was now the Egypt of the Arabs. In Irak fanaticism and schism throve on fertile soil: the philosophy and subtlety of Babylonia were mastering the rude wildlings of the desert. In Basra and Kufa theologians disputed in battalions; while in the mountains of Shehrizor throngs of ferocious Kharijites wandered from place to place, plotting destruction and revolution in the cause of theocracy. In Persia the original people were discarding their ancient faith and assimilating the new one to their needs. On the outer marches of Barbary and Khorasan, the bolder spirits of Islam were conquering and converting the savage Turks and Berbers, thus preparing a scourge with which to harass mankind for another one thousand three hundred years.

In Armenia plundering expeditions raided and destroyed; and perhaps pagan mountaineers, perceiving a road to licence and gain, began to talk in their barbarous tongue of the one true God and his Prophet Mamo.[1] On the Amanus, Moslem and Roman observed the truce which neither approved and neither dared break.

In this condition of affairs one may detect four moving principles in the Moslem world. The principle of Syria, where centuries of Roman rule caused men to tend to bear respect for worldly authority, and approved and comprehended an Imperial theory of government. The principle of Arabia, where the remaining people unconsciously leaned toward patriarchal

[1] Mamo is the nearest sound to Mahommed that a Kurd's untutored tongue can reach.

aristocracy and severance from the outer world, since Arabia's geographical position allows of her people giving, but has never permitted them to receive. The principle of Irak, where all was argument, theology, fervour, zeal, contradiction, poetry and metaphysic strife. The principle of the frontiers, where the spirit of Holy War ruled supreme and untarnished; for no matter what Caliph ruled, no matter what schismatic or civil brawls rent the Empire of Mohammed, the men of action still streamed East and West to slay or convert in the name of God, and publish the fame of his Prophet.

Having briefly sketched the motive forces which impelled the people, mobs, armies, and sects, it is now my task to introduce the reader to the men who led them.

When the news of the death of Yazid reached Husain, the besieger of Mecca, that officer's first action was to offer to acknowledge Ibn Zobair as Caliph if he would but accompany his late enemy to Damascus. Ibn Zobair, true to his native bias, refused to leave the Holy City, and preferred to repair the damage done by the siege, to give judgment in the market place, and to lead the prayers in the temple. Ibn Zobair dreamed of reviving the system of government which was ended by the death of Othman, and of maintaining Mecca as not only the religious but civil centre of the Mohammedan world. Meanwhile Damascus was the scene of perplexing and rapid revolution. On Yazid's death his son, Mo'awiya the Second, reigned for thirty days, dying at the end of that time of poison or disease.

Khalid the Second, son of Yazid, was then proposed, but his tender years and gentle manners prevented his acceptance by the Emirs and Chieftains of the court.

As a compromise Merwan-ibn-al-Hakam was then selected, since he was of Omayyad extraction, and his services as secretary to Othman gave men sufficient confidence in his powers of administration. Merwan was proclaimed Caliph on condition that he should marry Yazid's widow, and adopt Khalid as heir to the throne.

The accession of Merwan was not achieved without some trouble, nor was he firmly established even in Syria until he had fought a considerable action and defeated and slain a Bedawi

chief named Dehak who favoured the cause of Ibn Zobair. When Merwan was at last accepted as Caliph in Syria, the Empire was momentarily divided between himself and Ibn Zobair. The latter was acknowledged approximately in Irak, Khorasan, Hejaz and Egypt; while apparently the Omayyad was accepted by the chieftains of Syria, northern Mesopotamia, and Persia, and also controlled the troops operating in North Africa. Within a short time of his accession Merwan succeeded in driving this rival force out of Egypt, and the Syrian and Arabian powers appear to have held for a brief space the northern and southern halves of the Moslem world.

The situation, already somewhat complicated, was made the more complex by an anarchical development in Irak. The Kharijites of Basra and the Shiite sympathisers with Husain who dwelt in Kufa, made common cause against both Caliphs and formed a third party in the contest. We have therefore the troops of Ibn Zobair fighting with the army of Merwan in South Syria, the Kharijites invading northern Syria under a leader named Sulaiman, while a Shiite chieftain named Mokhtar intrigued against the officers of Ibn Zobair in Irak.

Merwan succeeded in freeing southern Syria from the presence of the Meccan forces, while the ferocious Abdallah-ibn-Ziyad drove back the Kharijites in the north, and slew their leader; but in Irak the Shiites under Mokhtar seem to have have held their own. Merwan, at this juncture, appears to have shown signs of having some intention of playing his adopted son Khalid false. At any rate, Yazid's widow's suspicions of her second husband's honesty were so great that she decided to resume her former state, and one night dropped a cushion across Merwan's face and sat upon it until life was extinct. This rash act on the part of the untrusting widow in no way advanced the cause of Khalid, and Abdel Malik, the warlike son of Merwan, was chosen and proclaimed as his father's successor without difficulty. Meanwhile Mokhtar, the Shiite leader in Irak, succeeded in obtaining the countenance of Mohammed-ibn-Hanifa, a surviving son of Ali, who had hitherto led a retired life at Medina, and secured the whole-hearted support of the entire Shiite faction. Calling himself the lieutenant of the

Mahdi, Mokhtar broke out in open rebellion against the government of Ibn Zobair, and appeared on the scene as a third pretender to supreme power. The Omayyad Abdel Malik was faced with a possible attack from Arabia and northern Mesopotamia, which had gone over to the cause of Mokhtar, and was consequently obliged to divide his forces into two armies for the purpose of watching his respective rivals. Luckily for the Omayyad cause, Ibn Zobair and Mokhtar spent more energy in attacking one another than in fighting with their mutual foe. Mokhtar invaded Arabia and was driven back; Ibn Zobair's brother, Mosab, invaded Irak and was victorious. Mokhtar was slain, and the Meccan pretender was once more in possession of his lost province.

Possibly Ibn Zobair would have turned his attention to Abdel Malik in Syria, but before he could consider the matter the Kharijites poured down from Shehrizor into the low countries of Basra, and thus occupied his attention to the full. Abdel Malik made ready to attack Ibn Zobair, and considered the weakest point in his enemy's line to be the distracted regions of Kufa and Basra. Scarcely had he started than he was forced to retrace his steps. A pretender had appeared in Damascus, and the garrison had gone over to him before the enemy could be attacked. The Omayyad Caliph was obliged to besiege and recapture his own capital. Hardly had this been accomplished, and Abdel Malik was once more preparing to set forth, than news was brought that the Romans were about to break the treaty of Yazid and invade Syria.

Abdel Malik patched up a peace with Constantinople in all haste, yielding to the most extravagant financial demands of the Emperor; for he knew full well that money, and money alone, could save him in such an extremity.

The Omayyad Caliph set out for Irak, and, by buying over the officers of his enemy, contrived to defeat Ibn Zobair's brother, Mosab, who fell in battle soon after active hostilities had commenced.

When Irak fell into the hands of the Syrian it was, as may well be imagined, in a condition of the wildest disorder and confusion, and fully a year was consumed by Abdel Malik and his generals in the pacification of that district, and the neigh-

bouring Eastern provinces, which were hot-beds of Kharijite schism and disaffection.

However, the sectaries and fanatics were temporarily crushed by a general named Mohallab, and, late in 71 A.H., Khorasan, which had always remained loyal to Ibn Zobair, was added to the dominions of the Omayyads. Abdel Malik had hemmed his rival's power within the limits of Arabia, for Ibn Zobair could hardly count on support in any other part of the world. Abdel Malik decided to put an end to his rival's small area of authority, and summoned an army at Damascus for the conquest of Mecca, but none of the Syrian officers or Emirs would accept the hateful task of besieging the Holy City; they had no desire to emulate the prowess of Obadallah-ibn-Ziyad or Shamir, and stoutly refused to lead the troops upon so sacrilegious an expedition. Abdel Malik was on the point of abandoning the scheme, when an obscure officer named Hajjaj came forward and offered to conduct the army.

This man, whom legend has delighted to surround with a quantity of repulsive qualities and characteristics, appears to have been a soldier of daring resourcefulness, equipped with military and administrative talents of an uncommon kind. Abdel Malik at first hesitated to entrust an army to a person of so little experience, but, surprised at the fellow's insistence, at last acceded to his demands, and gave him command of some 3,000 men. Hajjaj marched off into Hejaz, and, carrying all before him, was soon encamped outside Mecca. The Caliph, perceiving that there was some method in the apparent madness of his new general, provided him with the reinforcements that were required for the siege of the Holy City.

Ibn Zobair held out bravely for a time, but circumstances were too strong for him: he had lost his opportunity when he refused to proceed to Syria. Arabia had been emptied of men and Ibn Zobair could look nowhere for allies, assistance, or succour.

In desperation the Meccan Caliph threw himself on the swords of the besiegers, and left Abdel Malik sole surviving Lord of the Moslem world. The problem of the mastership of Islam had been solved. Mecca and Medina, save as places of pilgrimage, disappear from the pages of political history, and Arabia became a part of the Syrian Empire of the Omayyads.

# CHAPTER XVII

## THE EAST AND WEST

692–715 A.D. 73–96 A.H.

### § 1. *The East*

MECCA had fallen and Ibn Zobair was dead ; but Mohallab the governor of Irak, who, previous to the siege of Mecca, had contrived to hold the Kharijites and Shiites in check, suddenly found himself faced by a disaffection among his troops and a growing power among his enemies.

Abdel Malik was fortunate in possessing so energetic and able an officer as Hajjaj, for the continually recurring disorders and rebellions in Persia and Irak, unless put down with a firm hand once and for all, threatened to become the chronic condition of affairs in those regions. Abdel Malik decided to despatch Hajjaj to Irak to reduce Persia and the Eastern provinces to order.

Hajjaj, who was given almost vice-regal powers, set to work to reorganise the government out of the chaos into which it had fallen. The army was disciplined and purged of evil elements ; and while Hajjaj kept order in Basra and Kufa, Mohallab was able to take the field once more. In a hotly contested campaign of eighteen months' duration, the Kharijites and Shiites were finally put down, and permanent government firmly established.

Hajjaj concluded that neither Basra nor Kufa would in future be safe positions from which to administer so fickle, turbulent and inflammable a region.

Both these cities were liable to sudden and violent outbreaks of a religious or political zeal, in the midst of which a government might be overturned, or a governor assassinated, with very

little difficulty and without any previous warning. Accordingly Hajjaj decided to set up a new city on the Tigris, midway between Basra and Kufa, whence a governor might keep an eye on both of them, intercept treasonable correspondence, impose taxes, punish evil-doers, or despatch extra reinforcements to local garrisons without immediate danger to himself. The point selected by Hajjaj for the building of this administrative capital was called Wasit, and the city which he founded was given the same name.

The position of Wasit was extremely favourable, not only from a political but also from a commercial point of view. The Tigris supplied it with an excellent waterway connecting the upper rivers with the sea, the fertile lands in its neighbourhood were productive of abundant crops, and the presence of the governor and his troops assured the inhabitants of security and peace. Wasit grew and prospered until it became one of the chief towns of Irak, famous for its groves and palaces, its colleges and schools, its bridges and its palaces. The most splendid of the latter, named House of the Green Dome, the glittering tiles of which were visible for a distance of seven leagues from the city, was built by Hajjaj for his own and the public use.

Hajjaj had now fixed the government of Irak on a basis so secure and stable, that when the news came to Wasit in the year 86 A.H. that Abdel Malik was dead, and that Walid the First reigned in his place, not a Kharijite stirred from his place, not an Emir rebelled, and not a word was spoken of insurrection or disaffection. Hajjaj had first cowed and then administered the turbulent province.

We must now turn our eyes northward towards the province of Khorasan, whither the most venturesome and hardy warriors of Islam had borne their standard. Mohallab the governor had died after carrying the line of conquest up to the Oxus; his son Yazid was displaced by Hajjaj shortly before the death of Abdel Malik; and during the first months of the reign of Walid, Qotaiba-ibn-Muslim was sent to Merv to assume the headship of the province of Khorasan.

What was the nature of the political situation is by no means easy to ascertain; beyond the Oxus general indications suggest

a number of small states whose rulers depended for military forces on a number of semi-nomadic Turkish tribes.

At any rate on his first northerly excursion from Merv, Qotaiba was supported by a goodly following of local notables from Balkh and Badghis who accompanied him to the banks of the Oxus, where the prince of Saghanian met the Moslem Emir with gifts and a promise of tribute. The neighbouring rulers of Shuman and Akhrum likewise tendered their submission without offering any serious opposition. The following year Qotaiba led his army toward the district of Bokhara, and after some severe fighting took the town of Baykand on its outskirts. Hajjaj seemed to think that his lieutenant was not pressing the Turks with sufficient vigour, and urged him to invade Bokhara, Kish and Nakhshab, without fear of mishaps, bidding him rely on Irak for sufficient and prompt reinforcements in case of necessity.

Qotaiba obeyed his senior's commands with scrupulous exactness, and before long crossed the Oxus once again, scattered the Turkish forces completely, forced the King of Bokhara to pay tribute, and overawed the Prince of Sughd into paying an enormous indemnity. The thoroughness of the methods of Moslem conquest were probably not realised by the Turks. In the first instance the sudden incursion of an army, the obligatory payment of an indemnity, the carrying off of women, were to them no new things in war. What was new was the sudden incorporation of a portion of the population into the nation of the invaders, the immediate enfranchisement and perhaps promotion of local chiefs who accepted Islam, the building of mosques, and the gradual fading away of what had previously been the permanent order of things. Merv in the days of Qotaiba must have been as completely Mohammedanised as Wasit; the armies of Qotaiba which numbered in all 111,000 men contained not less than 7,000 natives of Khorasan, and 80,000 troops of Basra and Kufa, among whom were perhaps natives of every province in Persia, while no more than 24,000 were pure Arabs of Arabia.

Further it is known that numerous local nobles accompanied the governor of Khorasan on his expeditions, and we may infer that unless they had accepted Islam, they would not have been

permitted to join in the Jehad. However, though during the first years the Turks may have failed to realise the full importance of what was happening, when Qotaiba began pushing still further north even to the shores of the Aral Sea, it became obvious that the achievements of the new comers resembled neither a fleeting invasion of nomads from the northern plains, nor yet the irregular operations of the Sassanian armies of the past; and at last the Turks perceived that the coils were tightening round them and enmeshing them in a something they did not understand.

One of the chiefs who had yielded to Qotaiba and accepted the religion of the prophet, suddenly decided to endeavour to break the bonds that bound him and his people. He was Nizek, the lord of the region of Badghis. This noble, who had accompanied the conquering Emir on his last expedition, perhaps conceived that the Moslem power was extended over a vaster area than it had strength to administrate. Without raising any suspicions Nizek contrived to obtain leave of absence from the army, then slipped away with a small following to the hills of Khulun, on the slopes of the Hindu Kush. In that safe retreat the rebel King openly raised the standard of revolt, calling on all the surrounding princes to join him.

The Turk had shot his bolt too late. The Koran had too fast hold of the country to permit of its being thrown off. Before the princes of Balkh, Merv-er-Rud, Taliqan and Faryab could join Nizek, Qotaiba was upon them like a wolf on a sheep fold.

The pagan Turks ventured one battle, but the Moslems overthrew them without difficulty, and punishment followed in hideous shape. The prisoners were hanged in rows without mercy, and a gruesome avenue of gibbets, four parasangs in length, groaned and creaked under the weight of the dead bodies of those who had been captured.

The Turkish princes quailed before the ruthless severity of Qotaiba. Panic stricken, they deserted their leader, and accepted Islam finally. Nizek, abandoned by his countrymen, fled in dismay to a stronghold in the mountains of the Hindu Kush, whither the merciless Qotaiba pursued him. The Turk

held out in his castle while the multitudes of the Arab Emir encompassed him; but the walls were strong, and at the end of two months it became apparent to Qotaiba that approaching winter would free Nizek of his presence.

Now in the mind of the governor of Khorasan began a long battle between expediency and conscience—a battle which has raged in many an Arabian brain, and which has scarcely ever but one issue. Nizek must be captured and slain; so long as he lived, Islam was unsafe beyond the Oxus. But neither valour nor brute force could accomplish this end. Qotaiba's problem was, then, as to how he might betray the Turk without formal dishonour to himself.

Qotaiba considered the matter for a while, then sent for Sulaim the councillor, and said to him: "O Sulaim, fetch me hither Nizek, without giving him promise of his life. If he will not come without a promise, then make a compact with him; but if thou returnest without him, assuredly I will hang thee." "O Emir," replied Sulaim, "give orders to the Captains of the outposts that they do as I command them." Qotaiba did as Sulaim desired, and the councillor set out upon his mission. When he reached the outposts he bade the officers mark the road he should follow, and told them to secure the byways and paths leading to the fortress after he had left the Moslem lines. Having given these orders, Sulaim then requested that he should be accompanied by a few beasts charged with a quantity of rich provisions. When these had been prepared he advanced to the castle, and having obtained admission was led into the presence of Nizek. "Hast thou come to betray me?" cried the Turk. "Nay," answered the councillor, "surely I will not betray thee, though thou art indeed a rebel and a contriver." Nizek was appeased by this answer. "O Sulaim," he cried, "what would you have me do?" The Arab then informed the chieftain that Qotaiba had decided to prosecute the siege during the whole winter, even at the risk of losing his army. But Nizek was troubled. "I dare not surrender," cried he, "without promise of quarter." Sulaim must have felt the cord tightening about his throat when he heard this reply: "Surely," said he, "Qotaiba does not desire to slay thee; safest for thee would be to go to him secretly, then he cannot kill thee for very shame." The Turk

hesitated. "These then are thy thoughts?" "Assuredly they are, O Nizek." Qotaiba's hypothetical noose which Sulaim felt round his throat, began to slacken, but closed again with a jerk when Nizek said: "And I think that Qotaiba will slay me the moment I come before him." Sulaim concealed his chagrin. "I have given thee good advice, take it or leave it, for now I must be returning." The simple Turk was completely deceived. "At least, O Sulaim, eat with us before leaving the castle." Once more the rope slipped on to the councillor's shoulders. "Indeed," he replied, "I have brought food with me"; and so saying, he ordered the animals to be unloaded. When the starving troops of the garrison saw the food, they rushed forward and devoured it. Nizek was overcome with confusion, and Sulaim, assuming the pitying compassion which a brave man bears to a noble enemy, said: "I spoke in good faith. Assuredly I fear for thee lest thy followers betray thee; come with me to Qotaiba, and God willing all will be well."

But Nizek still hesitated so terribly, that again the cruel thongs pressed so hard on Sulaim's gullet that he cried: "O Nizek, has not quarter been promised thee; canst thou doubt my word?" And the Turk yielded to the diplomatist.

Shortly after, Sulaim came forth from the castle accompanied by Nizek, who, as the gates closed behind them, was suddenly filled with apprehension. "O Sulaim, if a man ever knew the hour of his death, I am he—I die when I meet Qotaiba." Sulaim endeavoured to calm his fears. A little further down the path, the men whom Sulaim had concealed intercepted the Turkish escort that followed the party. "Here is the first trap," muttered Nizek. "Nay," cried Sulaim, "it were better for thee that they should not follow us." Qotaiba, now that he had his enemy in his clutches, blushed to strike a dishonourable blow; and desiring some excuse, he sent word to ask Hajjaj what should be the fate of the prisoner—as well ask a wolf what should be done with a stray lamb! In forty days the answer came commanding the Turk's instant execution.

Qotaiba, after the fashion of his people when desirous of doing wrong in a genteel fashion, now began to work himself up into a state of righteous indignation. "Thou hast no promise

of mercy from me," he cried, when Nizek was led before him. "Not from thee, indeed, but from Sulaim," replied the Turk. "Thou liest, enemy of God," roared Qotaiba; "no one would grant quarter to such a villain as thou art," and Nizek was led back to prison, for Qotaiba was still uneasy. Unable to satisfy himself, he asked his followers for advice. The fanatic said: "He is the enemy of God, slay him"; the just said: "You have granted him quarter, you cannot break your oath"; and the worldly: "If you do not order his execution the troops will rebel." Torn by conflicting emotions Qotaiba bowed his head and then cried out: "O God, if I die pronouncing the words 'kill him,' still I pronounce them—let him die"; and Nizek and his sons died on the word.

After the execution of Nizek, Qotaiba undertook the conquest of Transoxania in earnest, and for six years pursued his victorious course unhampered and unchecked. There seemed for the moment to be no limit to the possible empire which was unfolding itself before the Moslem conquerors. Each year added new territories, new vassals, and new peoples to the Moslem dominion. Now it extended only to Kish and Nakhshab; a year later the whole region of Khwarizm yielded its prince, people, cities and districts, without striking a blow, and the banners of the Beni Temim reflected in the icy waters of the Aral sea; another year passed and Qotaiba turned eastward and established his rule in Samarkand, Shash, and Farghana; another twelve months elapsed and his advance guards were in Kashgar, and his ambassadors treating with the Emperor of China. From Kashgar to Basra is a distance of about 2,000 miles.

We stand amazed at these conquests; words fail one when the magnitude of the achievements is realised. Where is Medina? Where is Badr? and where is Kashgar? What is this unknown force that has burst upon the world? What manner of men are these Moslems? There is nothing in history to equal their tale—this is not the conquest of Alexander with the culture of Greece, the valour of Macedonia, and his own unfettered genius to aid him. Nor is it the dull impact of a barbarian horde thrusting blindly in search of victual and pasture; nor yet is it the slow and deliberate annexation of various small states by an

overwhelming organisation, as in the case of Rome—it is the Arab of the desert, into whose head an idea has come, and he is giving that idea to the world.

. . . . . .

Presently a change came over Khorasan and the dominions of the north. News was brought that Hajjaj, the governor of Irak, was dead; that Walid the Caliph had followed him to the grave; and that Sulaiman, the son of Abdel Malik, was now Commander of the Faithful.

Now Qotaiba and Hajjaj, at the instigation of Walid, had long opposed the succession of Sulaiman, who, they knew, detested them both and would degrade them at the first opportunity. Consequently, when Qotaiba learned that both his patron and his prince were dead, and that Sulaiman was Caliph, he knew that his dreams of Eastern conquest were at an end, and that, unless he bestirred himself quickly, he would soon be outlawed or exiled.

The man who had conquered Transoxania was not one to relinquish his spoils without a struggle. He marshalled his armies, busied himself with preparation for rebellion, and intrigued with the local chiefs whom he had conquered and converted, sounding his officers and bribing his troops. But all did not go smoothly. Something was amiss. The Turkish and Persian lords seemed cold; the Emirs looked at him askance; the soldiers were sullen. Qotaiba then realised that long before the death of Walid the agents of Sulaiman had been working in secret, undermining his influence, and spreading dissensions among his followers. Nor had this been a difficult task, since the governorship of Khorasan was a tempting bait to many a traitor, and the downfall of Qotaiba might prove the making of many a lesser man.

Qotaiba decided to risk all in a public appeal to his Arabian troops. He harangued the Arabs, since it was they who formed the nucleus and cohesive portion of his army; he prayed to God, he told them of the victories he had gained for them, the spoils he had given them. He reminded them of the wretched and profitless exploits they had been engaged in before they came under his command. He asked them whether they would still serve him, or whether they would rather be led

by his predecessor Yazid, the son of Mohallab, the incompetent favourite of the new Caliph.

The Arabs listened to his address in stony silence; not a single syllable escaped them, not a man uttered a word of applause.

Qotaiba knew that he had been betrayed, and with the knowledge came rage and fury. In his passion he spoke from his heart: "May God have no mercy on the fool who puts his trust in such men as you! By God you can crack a woman's skull, for you are valiant men! would you save me in peace or war? You raft punters who have dropped barge poles to take up lances! You trash of the desert! you faithless liars! Did I not find you driving asses and plodding behind oxen? Have I not filled you with wealth and riches and made the Lords of Persia your slaves?" But the Arabs would not move, and Qotaiba withdrew into his palace consumed with wrath. His friends told him he had insulted the Shaykhs of the Beni Wail and put to shame the noblest of his followers. But Qotaiba was too angry to care. "Nobles!" he cried, "nobles! they are wither wrung camels haled together for the tax-gatherer.

"Nobles! nay the Beni Wail are pimps! the Beni Temin are baboons! the Abdul Kays are ghouls of the waste. By God, if ever I master them I will break their backs."

Well might Qotaiba rage at the perfidy of his followers; he might perhaps have remembered the fate of the hapless Nizek, but very little time remained to him. The Arab troops were urged on to mutiny, and though Qotaiba managed for a time to keep the support of a few Persians and Turks, it was not for long. He died sword in hand, fighting to the last against the very men whom he had so often led to victory. As he lay dying he extemporised a couplet in bitter taunt against his faithless soldiers:

> "A son of mine, in youth I taught the bowman's craft.
> Now grown a man, on me that bowman turns his shaft."

## § 2. *The West*

Having thus described briefly the course pursued by the Moslem Emirs, Hajjaj and Qotaiba, in the east, we must now

endeavour to trace the tendency of history during the reigns of Abdel Malik and Walid in the west. The task is by no means easy, since the authorities are vague and fragmentary, and the historians of the time, both Arabian and Greek, are far more engrossed in recording the intrigues and revolutions of the palaces of Constantinople and Damascus than in describing, with any detail or accuracy, the campaigns and raids in Asia Minor and Armenia.

The glamour of the conquests of the Moslems in Spain and Transoxania seems to have blinded the historians as to events which took place on the Roman frontier; the Byzantine historians lived in an age too chaotic and confused to permit of their relating with much discrimination a sequence of petty disasters and victories on the distant frontiers—mishaps and successes which paled before the more terrible calamities that were continually occurring in Constantinople and its immediate neighbourhood. Abdel Malik must have been glad to resign the government of the east to so able a servant as Hajjaj, since the distractions with which he was surrounded at Damascus must have made it impossible for him to attend in person to his more distant and inaccessible provinces. After Hajjaj had left for Irak, the Caliph realised that, in the west at least, Islam had suffered a grievous set-back during the last stages of his struggle with Ibn Zobair. North Africa had completely revolted, the newly-founded city of Kairawan had been lost, while the Greeks of Asia Minor and the Christians of Armenia were beginning to assume a more hostile attitude than before. Abdel Malik accordingly prepared to engage in a three-fold battle; one army he despatched to North Africa under Hasan ibn Noman, a second to guard the passes of the Amanus under Mohammed ibn Merwan, while a third, under Othman ibn Walid, he sent out to threaten Armenia in the direction of Diarbekir.

In Africa the Moslems were uniformly successful, the rebels were dispersed or reconverted, and an independent campaign was set on foot for the conquest of the whole of the northern coast of the continent. The Armenian expedition appears to have met with little opposition, Diarbekir was re-taken, and seemingly the Moslems would appear to have entered into semi-

peaceful negotiations with the nobles of the northern table-land.

However, the army destined for Asia Minor met with less success, since Justinian, the last of the Emperors of the house of Heraclius, had now at his disposal sufficient troops, not only to check, but actually to attack the invaders.

The outbreak of hostilities between Constantinople and Damascus may be attributed to the fact, that neither side was any longer obliged by circumstances to observe the peace which both parties had bound themselves, perhaps reluctantly, to maintain.

Justinian had been unable to attack Abdel Malik, owing to the continual encroachments of the Bulgarians into Macedonia [1]; the Caliph, on the other hand, was in perpetual dread of the armies of Ibn Zobair. Strangely enough, Justinian administered a decisive defeat to the Bulgarians almost at the same time as the troops of Abdel Malik captured Mecca: once the Moslem and Christian rulers were free from fear of an attack from within, war between them became a matter of certainty, the nature of the formal excuse for breaking the peace mattering but little to either. As it happened, it was Justinian who threw down the gage, taking as his reason for war the fact that the Arabs had latterly paid the treaty tribute in coin of their own manufacture.

The ensuing campaign was undecided; the Moslems obtained some early successes, but were nearly surrounded and destroyed by the Imperial armies, and would certainly not have made good their escape from Cilicia, whither they had penetrated, had it not been for the desertion of the Bulgarian troops, who had been recruited by Justinian from among the prisoners he had made in Macedonia.

Had Justinian been a man of any ability or worth, he might, at this juncture, have retrieved the disasters which had befallen the Empire during the preceding century. But the degenerate prince took no advantage of his opportunity; instead of pursuing his retreating enemies, he returned to Constantinople, where, with the assistance of a monk and eunuch, he contrived by extortion, cruelty, and misgovernment to make himself so

[1] So imperative had Eastern tranquillity been to the Greeks, that, as we have seen, they had even agreed to keep the Mardites in order.

odious that the people, having deposed him, sent him to exile in the Crimea, and set up a general named Leontius in his place.

With the overthrow of Justinian the Empire of Constantinople entered upon an epoch of confusion and chaos, such as it had not experienced since its severance from the west. In 695, Justinian was deposed by Leontius; in 698, Leontius was hurled from his throne by Tiberius; in 705, Justinian escaped from exile and was reinstated, only to be slain and replaced, after a brief but bloody reign, by Philipicus Bardanes in 711; his assassin enjoyed the throne until 713, when he was blinded and exiled by Anastasius II, who in his turn fell a victim to Theodosius III in 716, who was dethroned by Leo the Isaurian two years later.

During this period of upheaval, the Moslems were able to harass and ravage the Imperial provinces without fear of meeting other than local troops, or being put to any greater trouble or risk than was incurred by the siege of the various towns and castles which they attacked. During the reign of Abdel Malik they pushed their African conquests as far as Carthage, and apparently obtained the submission of Armenia.

After the accession of Walid, Maslama, the son of Abdel Malik, penetrated further into Asia Minor and temporarily occupied the cities of Heraklia, Armorium, Amasia, Malatia, and Samosata.

On the death of Walid one may assume that the northern limit, separating the Empire of the Caliphate from that of Constantinople, would have been correctly marked by a line stretching from Marash to Malatia. Northward and westward of that line the Moslems raided annually, but seem to have made no attempt to form any lasting or permanent conquest. The explanation of this curious failure of the Arabs perhaps lies in geographical and ethnological conditions prevailing beyond the Taurus.

The rugged mountains were inhabited by a war-like and independent peasantry, forming a combination which proved a greater stumbling block to the Arabs than a highly civilised agricultural tract, or a region of steppes with a nomadic population. In Syria and Irak the Moslems could seize and adapt the

existing machinery of government to their own ends; in Transoxania and Merv the cavalry could easily harass the nomads into subjection; but in the Taurus they could obtain no foothold, since the gradual subjection of the mountaineers was unremunerative and consequently distasteful to them, while the capture and occupation of the cities of the Greeks gave them no hold over the surrounding population. But if the operations against the Christians in Asia were unfruitful, the campaign in Africa had been glorious in the extreme.

As Walid lay dying in Damascus, his two Emirs, Tarik and Musa, hurried to the capital to inform him that, not only was the whole of North Africa from the Red Sea to the Atlantic subject to him, but that Spain had been conquered, the armies of the faithful were encamped at the foot of the Pyrenees, and their fleets were ravaging the Mediterranean sea-board of France and Italy.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## THE DECLINE OF THE OMAYYADS

715–50 A.D. 96–132 A.H.

UNDER Walid the Omayyad House reached the highest point of its glory; thenceforward the destiny of the line of Mo'awiya took a rapid downward course, which neither success in the field nor acquisitions of territory could check. Although for some years after the accession of Sulaiman, the decay of the power of the Syrian Caliphs was superficially concealed, the student will notice in the course of the following chapter that in reality it proceeded apace. Walid, indeed, was the last of the princes of his family who could afford to repose the slightest confidence in his lieutenants and Emirs; he was the last of the rulers of Damascus who did not learn with apprehension of conquests and victories on his eastern and western frontiers; he was the last who did not look forward to the return of a victorious General with greater fear than a report of a disaster and distant rebellion.

The moment Sulaiman was proclaimed Caliph it was apparent that the successor of Walid was one under whose rule ability was looked upon as a dangerous virtue: for having conquered Spain Musa was bastinadoed and disgraced, his son Abdul Aziz was beheaded, Tarik driven into private life, Mohammed-ibn-Kasim, who led victorious Moslems into India, was outlawed and exiled, while as we have seen the acquisition of Transoxania by Qotaiba was rewarded with death.

In his brother Maslama alone, among the lieutenants of his predecessors, did Sulaiman appear to recognise merit or constancy. This chieftain, who had for some years been engaged in prosecuting a desultory warfare with the scattered armies and

local levies of the Byzantine Empire, was now given charge of an expedition which promised, if successful, to crown the glories of the Caliphate with the Imperial diadem of the Caesars. Sulaiman, though perhaps wanting in the greater qualities of a prince, at least was not afflicted with a lack of ambition, and he dreamed that the annals of his reign should eclipse in brilliance that of the former Caliphs, by recording the capture of Constantinople and the final destruction of the Empire of the Romans.

Maslama was entrusted with the task of reducing the last stronghold of the Christians to Mohammedan subjection; an enormous fleet of Egyptian and Syrian vessels was put at his disposal, and the home provinces of Damascus were ransacked for men and treasure with which to enable them to maintain and supply an overwhelming army for the double purpose of siege and blockade. Once more the fate of the world trembled in the balance; Europe, unorganised and incoherent, lay weak as a new-born infant, in ignorance of the impending danger; in Constantinople the citizens stood trembling around a feeble and incompetent prince, while against them marched the undefeated warriors of Islam, filled with zeal and confidence, under the leadership of one of their most famous Emirs.

Constantinople and Europe were inevitably doomed had it not been for the action of one man. From all the disasters which had befallen the Byzantines since the accession of Justinian, one Imperial officer alone had emerged with an unsullied reputation. He was Leo the Isaurian, the commander of the Anatolic Theme.

Leo proceeded to Constantinople as a rebel, and both Greek and Arab writers concur in a vague hint that there was some understanding between the Isaurian and his foes from the East; Theodosius abdicated and Leo was emperor. Maslama had apparently been awaiting this event in expectation of a peaceable surrender of the capital. Sulaiman the Caliph commanded his brother to take the city; the Arabs swarmed into Thrace and Bythinia; the Egyptian fleets blockaded the Bosphorus and Propontis, and the Imperial Capital was hemmed in on every side. Of this siege we know little, the historical picture is blurred and confused; through the driving mist of time we get

occasional, but vivid, glimpses of those two years of unavailing effort and steadfast defence.

Eventually Leo took the initiative; a little fleet stole away from the Golden Horn, confused cries rang out across the water, and a vast column of smoke rose in the air,—the Egyptian fleet was burned. Now came a nipping frost, the dome of Santa Sophia and red roofs of the palaces whiten under the warm haze of winter fires, which hangs over the beleaguered town. But without, in the Moslem lines, there are misery and suffering indescribable. The rigid limbs of men and beasts protrude stiffly through the trampled snow, the black tents grow thin and tattered, the icy northern winds howl through the narrow straits, breathing cold death and frozen pestilence among the shuddering masses of the faithful. Wazirs, Emirs, saints, and martyrs wither and perish beneath the blasting strokes of the new year; fresh ships and fresh men come from the south to take the places of those that are lost, only to pass through the same gate. The hosts of Islam fade away. Sulaiman the Caliph dies while marching to their assistance. Leo grows bolder, crosses the Bosphorus, and routs the watching army on the Asiatic shore. The Moslems are now in danger of being besieged within their camp themselves. The Christians of Asia Minor are ready to rise; swarms of Bulgarians flock to the rescue of the beleaguered city. Threatened on every side, his fleets destroyed, his armies but a shadow of their former strength, Maslama had no choice but to accept the decree of the Decreer; reluctantly he struck his tents and retired to Magnesia. Constantinople had been saved.

Although Leo the Isaurian has justly earned the title of the saviour of Europe, we must remember that the strength of the enemy whom he had to face could not at that time be measured by the numbers of his subjects nor the extent of his dominions. Historians are a little apt to assume that, at the time of the second siege of Constantinople, the Caliph Sulaiman could concentrate such forces as he desired at any given point. This, indeed, was far from being the case; the student will have noticed that Moslem success, from the very beginning, depended to a great degree on the disaffection or conversion of sections of the inhabitants of the territories invaded, and that each step of con-

quest provided men and money for the next campaign. The men of Medina subjected the tribes of the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf; they in turn subdued those people of Irak who subsequently swelled the ranks of the armies which over-ran Persia. Persians served in the armies which occupied Khorasan and Turks helped to conquer Transoxania, just as an influx of Berber converts made the annexation of Spain a possibility. But there were limits to this system of progressive absorption of peoples and kingdoms into the Moslem fold.

No Mohammedanised Spaniards seem to have assisted in the raids beyond the Pyrenees; no large additions to the Moslem ranks were gained in any of the Byzantine provinces west of the Taurus.

From these facts we may deduce that the army of Moslems were fighting under conditions quite different from those under which Transoxania and Spain had been conquered by Qotaiba and Musa. The latter had formed a base for further operations, and had not only conquered but actually absorbed the bulk of the populations in their rear before making a forward move; while Maslama was in the position of a general commanding an army in the heart of a foreign country, far removed from his base, and deriving nothing for his support or sustenance from the actual locality where he was conducting operations. Besides this point we must also take into consideration another feature of the situation, which is that the Empire of the Omayyad Caliphate was not one that could depend on its provinces for concentrated support; neither Irak, Persia, Transoxania, Barbary, Morocco nor Spain could provide men or arms for the siege of Constantinople; tribute and taxes, indeed, would be forthcoming from those distant regions for the equipment of an army, but as far as men and ships were concerned, the exceedingly limited area of Egypt and Syria was the only source of supply.

Had Constantinople fallen at the first onset all would have been changed, but Leo's first year of successful resistance practically made his ultimate relief a certainty. The final reserves of Egyptians and Syrians were probably very inferior troops, and when they were exhausted the Moslem attack was ended in an ignominious fiasco.

When Sulaiman died, his dominions were in an extremely

disordered condition. In North Persia Yazid-ibn-Mohallab, who succeeded Qotaiba, after meeting with serious disasters in the provinces of Jurjan, Tabaristan and Daylam, had finally conquered the South Caspian littoral. Owing to the prolonged siege of Constantinople Yazid had received very little assistance from Damascus, and as his conquests had been achieved entirely by his own efforts, he had been able to increase his personal authority to a very dangerous degree of independence. North Africa and Spain, owing to the difficulties of communication, were becoming irresistibly separated from the Empire, and local governors conducted wars, conquests, and raids against the Christians with little reference to headquarters.

Consequently, on succeeding to the Caliphate, Omar found the affairs of Islam deeply involved, Spain and North Africa ever tending to become separate principalities, Persia ready to revolt, and the army of Constantinople shattered and destroyed.

Omar was a stern orthodox Moslem of the old school, and his brief reign reminds one for a moment of those rugged heroes who had first drawn the sword of God in defence of the Koran. Already, worldliness, luxury, and pride of place had conquered the hearts of Moslem Emirs. The stones which Omar the First had thrown at the silk clad conquerors of Syria had had but little effect. Abu Serr had died alone in the desert. The tombs of Abu Bekr and Mohammed, like the Ka'ba, had become resorts of formal pilgrimage. Self-denial and poverty were the stock-in-trade of the religious devotee; prayers and sermons, the perquisites of the readers and clerks. Religious zeal was relegated to the mosque and the theological college, where the old Trinitarian and ethical contentions on predestination, or the origin of evil, of the departed Christian doctors were re-echoed in arguments concerning the universe and the essential co-existence of the "Koran" with God. The fierce, bold creed was transformed into a series of problems which were discussed with all the refinements of the metaphysical logicians; wars of the faith were degenerating into the conquests or raids of princes and Emirs. The desire to die a martyr's death on the battlefield was giving place to the desire for wealth and success in this world. Omar the Second's hope was to restore in this corrupted age the pristine virtue of the Moslem

commonwealth. He reduced the luxury of the Imperial court; he passed oppressive edicts against his non-Moslem subjects, and he ruled his Emirs with a rod of iron. Yezid, the governor of Khorasan, he imprisoned at Damascus until such time as he should disgorge the gold which he had amassed by illicit means. Maslama he upbraided publicly for his profusion and wealth. When the Viziers announced that the revenues were decreasing owing to the conversion of Christians, instead of relaxing his severities, the Caliph increased them and praised God that more souls were saved for Paradise. It would have been interesting to see what would have been the ultimate result of this return to primitive faith on the part of the Caliph had he lived a little longer.

But Omar's experiment was destined never to be put into practice. Before Yezid-ibn-Mohallab had given up his ill-gotten goods, before Maslama had been weaned from luxury, or the Christians and Jews expelled from the Moslem world, the Caliph sickened and died. The religious enthusiasm of Omar seems to have found no response in the breast of his immediate successor, Yezid-ibn-Abdul Malik. Nor was his attempt to reform the manners of the degenerating Moslems persevered in by any of the succeeding Omayyad Caliphs, a fact which, if it were needed, would prove beyond a doubt that Omar's ideas and hopes were but little in accord with the spirit of the age. Strangely enough, the failure of Omar to re-introduce simplicity and severity of religious conduct in Islam ran almost concurrently with the successful efforts of Leo the Isaurian to enshroud the neighbouring Christians in iconoclastic gloom. A very short time after, the lax servants of the Commander of the Faithful had begun to delineate the rude outlines of a human figure on the coinage, uttered in the name of the Caliph; the last smouldering embers of the arts were being trodden under foot in Constantinople by an Imperial order.

During the brief period which elapsed between the death of Omar and the accession of Yezid the Third, Ibn Mohallab, who was still languishing in prison, contrived to escape, fled to Basra, and raised the whole of Irak in rebellion.

After so long a period of repose, the wild Shia and Kharijite elements broke into a new combination. The population rose in

the name of Hasan and Husein, the tragedy of Kerbela was once more remembered, Omayyad supremacy challenged, Syrian governors deposed, and the whole of the work accomplished by the ruthless Hajjaj undone. The flame of rebellion spread from Basra to Kurdistan and thence eastward to Khorasan. But if Irak was prolific in rebellions they were seldom enough successful; the religious and political motives which separately impelled the various elements in these frequent insurrections, invariably ended in treachery and divided councils. The combination which had proved fatal to Ali, Husein, Hasan, Mokhtar, and Ibn Zobair now rendered the operations of the son of Mohallab equally futile.

When the leaders of the rebellion proposed a night attack on the Syrians who were marching under Maslama, the Kharijites objected that no attack must be made until the opposing enemy had openly stated their disbelief in certain religious doctrines. When Ibn Mohallab's brother endeavoured to rouse the martial ardour of the population by inflammatory addresses, learned and holy men negatived his speeches by proclaiming passive resistance and peaceful admonition as the only weapons which true believers could use against a tyrant. Meanwhile Maslama advanced with rapid and skilful marches. Ibn Mohallab was forced to accept battle while his army was yet disorganised, his supporters doubtful, and his plans unmade. As might be expected the first engagement ended in rebellion, and Ibn Mohallab, preferring death to dishonour, voluntarily sought his doom at the hands of Maslama's troops.

The religious tumult in Irak had scarcely been quelled by Maslama, when the news came from the north that the hordes of the Khazars and Alans were in full revolt and were now making common cause with their old enemies, the nobles of Armenia, in an attempt to shake themselves free of the yoke of the Caliphate.

A general named El Jarrah was selected to reconquer Armenia and the Caucasus. The task before him was serious and difficult; for centuries the war-like tribes of the Khazars had been the terror of their neighbours. Sometimes one heard of them raiding Armenia and even breaking into the countries as far west as Sivas, at others threatening Azerbaijan and the

lands south of Urumia; so mobile as to be difficult to pursue, so daring and elusive as to be impossible to check, they had always been the plague of Rome and Persia. Now, after a few years of tranquillity, they returned with redoubled vigour to harass and plague the Moslems.

El Jarrah made a bold bid for success by advancing over the Caucasus mountains, pushing his way into the heart of the country of his enemies, and so endeavouring to turn the tables on the tribesmen by occupying their cities and plundering and devastating their homes, even as they had raided in Azerbaijan and Armenia.

At first El Jarrah was apparently successful; the Khazars fled before him, and the whole of the lands as far north as Bab-al-Abwab seemed subdued. Indeed, so satisfactory did the issue of El Jarrah's campaign appear to the ministers at Damascus, that when the Caliph Yezid died his successor Hisham had no thought of replacing the general by anyone else. However, the new Caliph had not been long on the throne before news of crushing disaster roused him from his sense of security. El Jarrah had been slain, the whole of his army destroyed, the captured towns of the Caucasus lost or blockaded, while countless hordes of Khazars were once more pouring into Armenia and Azerbaijan, besieging the cities, massacring the newly-converted peasantry, and stirring up the remaining pagans and Christians to rebellion.

The Caliph was at first overwhelmed with grief at the magnitude of the disaster; but at last, with the aid of his ministers, he managed to raise and equip an army, which, under the leadership of Said-al-Hareshi, was despatched with orders to retrieve the lost fortunes of the Moslems.

It is in the eternal fitness of things that Hareshi went blind just before the Khakan of the Khazars, utterly disheartened by the pertinacity of the Moslem troops, abjured his religion, accepted the Koran, and became a vassal of the Caliphate.

During the years of the Khazar wars the population of the Moslem Empire had been slowly laying the foundations of modern Oriental history. In Spain the followers of the Prophet had swept beyond the Pyrenees; but as the Arabian leaven in their hosts wore thin and weak they lost that strange

power of assimilating the peoples whose lands they over-ran, degenerated from colonists of Morocco to the conquerors of Spain, from conquerors to the marauders of France, and as marauders breaking before the hosts of Charles Martel, retiring into the Iberian Peninsula never to emerge again save as enemies or freebooters.

In North Africa the coastwise population, which was so rapidly absorbed into the fold of Islam, now still more rapidly engulfed the Arabian armies of the Caliph in the ocean of the indigenous savagery, losing all touch or sympathy with east and west.

In Egypt and Syria a subordinate spirit remained ; for there, indeed, the provincial tradition of obedience to force still held good. On the frontiers of the Greek Empire a chronic war had taken the place of a doubtful peace ; and after the first fury had passed, the war degenerated into a series of raids and counter-raids without any purpose beyond plunder or petty revenge.

Out on the eastern frontiers of Khorasan the remaining unconquered tribes of pagan Turks attacked and harassed without achieving any definite result, retiring before superior numbers only to return when vigilance was relaxed. It may be seen that Islam as a single and united force had reached its natural limits and was completely exhausted ; henceforth, though still many new nations were to be drawn into its embrace, the work would not be accomplished either by desert Arabs or even by Emirs of the Caliph.

From the death of Yezid the Third the original motive power of the Mohammedan religion lost its energy. The idea of forming a single great world state, directed by a solitary head in whom religious and civil power was centred, ceased to occupy the minds of men. Henceforth Mohammedanism was to take a place as a religion among the religions of mankind, and its increase or decrease would depend rather on isolated political circumstances than on anything else. With the gradual fading away of the cosmopolitan ideal, the internal forces of disruption which were ever straining the inner fabric of the Empire gathered strength and volume. Once the hope of a Moslem world had been dissipated, the house of Omayya lost its power

rapidly. So long as Arabs conquered in the names of God, the Koran, and the Caliph, and so long as a succession of new peoples were in the process of being converted in those names, so long was the Caliphate strong and flourishing, and neither rebellion nor disaffection could bring about its collapse. But when conquest was replaced by mere defensive wars on the frontiers, or plundering expeditions beyond, the magic of the name of the house of Omayya rapidly lost its hold on the potential enthusiasm of the people, and other forces began to absorb their devotion and fidelity.

As might be expected, the first mutterings of the coming storm were heard in Irak, where the restless ghosts of Husein and Hasan still stirred men's minds to mutinous thoughts and bloody intrigues.

In Kufa the people might be cowed into submission, might pray for the success of Hisham, might crouch before the Emir of the Caliph on the day of audience, swear windy oaths of allegiance, cheer at the news of the conquest of the Khazars; but beneath the surface there boiled and seethed the most ferocious political hatred, religions, and passion. Every Kufan hung his head with shame when he thought of Kerbela; every Kufan Arab alike detested authority; every Kufan loathed Syrian government, not because it was Syrian but because it was government. Every Kufan dearly loved riot, dearly loved brawling, dearly loved revolution, strife, and excitement. In Kufa the Shia spirit never slumbered, and it only required a word, a man, and a favourable opportunity to blaze out with redoubled fury and vigour. Scarcely had the Khazar wars come to an end than the explosion took place with remarkable suddenness. In Kufa still lingered one direct descendant of the Alid house. His name was Zaid, the son of Ali, the son of Hasan, the son of Ali, the son of Abu Talib. In Zaid centred the hopes and aspirations of the revolutionary, and in him was once more incarnate that mild nature, that indecision of character, and that mystical and visionary disposition which had been the curse of all his family.

The whispering Shaykhs and babbling poets flocked round the house of Zaid, prayed him to lead them and their rabble against the Syrian tyrants, promised faithful service, and boasted,

of their prowess. Fatally undecided, Zaid listened; but neither encouraged them nor chided them in their frowardness. The Shaykhs continued to whisper and the poets to babble—rumours buzzed through the bazaars and markets that Zaid should head a rebellion—hummed so loud, indeed, that they passed the curtained doorways of the palace of the Syrian Emir. Presently officers of the government came to the house of Zaid, bidding him leave the town under pain of punishment. Zaid hesitated; said he was ill, that he would go. Yet he delayed long enough to enrage the Syrians and give hope to the Kufans, then departed.

Scarcely had Zaid left the town than the mob came out after him: "Whither goest thou? son of the Apostle!" they cried, and dragged him back by force. After some fashion Zaid contrived to appease the Syrian Emir; then, weakly giving way to the promptings of his adherents, began to intrigue. The Omayyad governor's suspicions were now thoroughly aroused. Either Zaid must go or a revolution break out. Yet it was difficult to convict the descendant of Ali of any serious intentions. His adherents were spied upon and searched, his servants watched, his movements noted; yet no evidence was forthcoming, until at last a certain poor man coming from the north was seized and arrested. Something in the fellow's demeanour excited the suspicion of the government spies; he was ragged, and only bore a staff in his hand. He almost escaped observation, and would have made away in freedom had not a soldier noticed a blot of wax on the wood of his stick. The wax was scraped away, the stick was hollow, and within a finely rolled and closely written parchment manuscript.

Imagine the feelings of the governor of Kufa when the screed was deciphered: in this short letter a fearful and far-reaching conspiracy was unveiled. It was an appeal in the name of Zaid to the Shiites of the Jazirah and of Mosul, not only to the Shiites and Kharijites, but to the Christians and Jews, calling on them to rise and exterminate their oppressors, and promising redress of wrongs, the punishment of tyrants, and the slaughter of the Syrians.

The governor of Irak, deciding to bring matters to a crisis at once, promptly despatched a force of troops under a competent

officer to Kufa. The same night Zaid was apprised by his friends of the betrayal of his cause; on this, the son of Ali decided to make the plunge into rebellion ere it was light, and, while the Omayyad troops were riding into the town, seventeen of Zaid's followers paraded the dark streets, giving the signal for rebellion, crying: "Zaid and Victory." By dawn Zaid himself joined them, and saw with consternation that only two hundred men had gathered together. The Kufans had again played the house of Ali false. They lurked in their houses, or assembled in the mosques like panic-stricken sheep.

The Omayyad governor had taken his measures in accordance with the situation. The gates of the mosques were guarded, the streets cleared and patrolled; vainly did Zaid shout "Men of Kufa! men of Kufa! you have sworn an oath—make your honour white by helping me!" The men of Kufa stopped still. In desperation Zaid led his men to the great mosque where above a thousand of his supporters were hiding, and where the troops of the Caliph guarded the gate. In fury he flung off his helmet and led his men to the charge bareheaded, crying: "I am Zaid the son of Ali—help me, O men of Kufa! do away with the shame of Kerbela when you sat silent and hearkened not to Husein—help me to uphold the right. Woe to ye, men of Kufa, if you desert me." But the men within the mosque stayed like frightened cattle in a pen, lowing and murmuring, but doing nothing. Twice Zaid charged the gate, twice he was driven back; once he gained the door and thundered against it with his sword. Sixty of his men were killed, the rest wounded, he himself was bleeding in a score of places; but still if those craven chatterers within made an effort, he might succeed.

The Syrians had been driven away by the sheer fury of his charge "Help me, O men of Kufa," he cried, "the right shall triumph and the wicked shall be dispersed." But it was too late. The Kufans remained silent within. For a moment the air was obscured by a cloud of Syrian arrows, and Zaid lay dead upon the ground amidst a heap of his few faithful companions. Tabari tells us nothing, but I wonder what the Syrian soldiers said when they opened the mosque gates, and drove into the

streets the cackling, craven cowards for whom Zaid had died so fine a death, and by whom Hasan and Husein were still unavenged.

The rebellion of Zaid had utterly failed; and though for a time his son Yahyah was passed on in disguise from town to town and village to village, he could do nothing to raise active enthusiasm for the house of Ali; and when Yahyah was eventually slain, the Shiite cause was eclipsed for many a long day But with the temporary disappearance of the Kharijite and Shiite confederation from the theatre of internal politics there came no respite for the Omayyad dynasty. At the time of the death of Hisham, in (125 A.H.) (743 A.D.), the popularity of the reigning family was vanishing more and more quickly. Hisham, though a wise financier, a mild ruler, and in all respects a moderate and thoughtful prince, had been unable during a reign of twenty years to do more than keep his Empire together by sheer force; there was no enthusiasm for the Caliphate, and there were no bonds of sentiment by which the imagination of its subjects could be held in thrall. Hisham contrived to keep the ship of the state afloat by compromise and care and determination; a like successor might have maintained it in a similar position for an indefinite period, but Walid the Second who now became Caliph was the very man who by his character and personality was doomed to precipitate a catastrophe.

Walid, although a man of retiring disposition, had studied deeply and widely the various and conflicting schemes of philosophy, which racked the minds and intellects of such Moslems as were not completely satisfied with the Koran, nor yet entirely engrossed in mundane affairs. As a result, Walid had to all intents and purposes abandoned the creed of the prophet and become either a pantheist or a materialist. Had Walid kept this fact a secret and distinguished himself by the correctness of his ablutions, the frequency of his prayers, and the rigidity of his moral discourse, it might not have mattered a great deal. But instead, with a simplicity and ingenuousness worthy of Julian the Apostate, he openly mocked at the ceremonies of the faith, jeered at the ludicrous jumble of the Koran, and abandoned himself and his court to pleasure and amusement. Now if the Omayyad line had had one merit hitherto it was that

its representatives had paid due deference to orthodox views, had maintained the public worship, and had been what a modern might call "highly respectable." However, when the Caliph Walid became known as a scoffer, and a wine-bibber, who said no prayers and ate swine's flesh, even this slender thread of propriety was snapped. That Walid was slain in a street fight soon after his succession is a matter of small moment. What is important, from an historical point of view, is the utter disrepute into which his actions brought the house of Omayya.

In the East a rapid sequence of short-lived rulers is an almost infallible presage of the impending fall of a dynasty.

The reckless Walid was succeeded by his first cousin, Yezid,[1] who vanished from the scene shortly after his accession, giving place to Ibrahim, who, in his turn, was dethroned within a few months by Merwan. Merwan was the only living member of the Omayyad house who had shown any capacity either in peace or war; his generalship was equal to that of any Emirs of his day, and he had gained a certain amount of credit in Armenia and on the Roman frontier. But neither valour nor military capacity could recover the lost prestige of the Caliphate. When Merwan reached the goal of his ambition he found himself but the leader of a failing cause, the representative of a discredited party, and the ruler of a dissolving Empire.

The Shiites had been crushed by the deaths of Zaid and Yahyah, but another and even more dangerous faction had been steadily gaining ground at the expense of both Omayyads and Alids. The new party which now threatened the internal peace of Islam was that of the house of Abbas. While the intrigues and rebellions of the Kharijites, legitimists and Shias had engrossed the whole of the attention of the Omayyad Caliphs, the descendants of Abbas had been quietly preparing to seize the reins of power.

The family of Abbas had long been regarded as of a sacred character, a carefully manipulated tradition pointing to Abbas as the one chosen to prepare the Prophet's body for burial, as the beloved of Ali, and the counsellor and companion of Abu Bekr, Omar and Othman. Rumours were craftily spread abroad that the children of Abbas had been privately invested

[1] He is said to have died of plague.

with the rights of the house of Ali. Prophecies were distorted or manufactured, foretelling the rise of the Abbasids to the throne of the Caliphs.

Since the death of Omar this subterranean intrigue had been slowly and craftily set on foot.

By degrees, without exciting any remarkable suspicion, the Abbasid family stealthily wriggled themselves into popularity. The first signs and aspirations of the Abbasids were visible in the reign of Omar ; and it speaks highly for their political talent and guile that no hasty rebellion, no abortive struggle was undertaken for more than thirty years after the death of that prince.

However, when Merwan became Caliph the ground had been completely prepared for the event which was to follow. Each unsuccessful Shia and Kharijite rebellion had added to the numbers of those on whom the Abbasid could rely, by demonstrating to the discontented and fanatical that the hated Syrians could only be overthrown by one single and combined effort, and by making it clear that the descendants of Abbas were the only men who could bind together their discordant forces. Hitherto the Abbasid cause had lacked one essential for victory, and that was a skilful general. The three surviving great-grandsons of the founder of the family, Ibrahim, Abu-l-Abbas, and Abu Ja'far, were none of them soldiers of note or men experienced in the field. Their organisation was widespread, their adherents numerous, their rivals discredited, and the moment ripe for striking a blow ; but unless some person could be found who might gain for them a brilliant initial success, they were doomed to languish in obscurity.

The Abbasids sought high and low for one who might act as champion and hero of their cause, and at last found him in the person of a certain soldier named Abu Muslim. Abu Muslim was one of the curious products of the spread of Islam : supposed to be of noble extraction, he had been carried off in youth as a slave from Persia by a tribe of Syrian Arabs ; with these he worked for a time as a saddler's apprentice, then was sold or handed over to the Abbasid family. These crafty intriguers soon noticed that Abu Muslim was a youth of no ordinary ability, and decided to make use of him as one of the greater pieces in

the game they were playing. Not only was Abu Muslim one endowed with the most brilliant gifts, but further it was rumoured that in his veins ran the blood of the Kings of Persia; and to such masters of secret and subtle policy as the leaders of the house of Abbas, this in itself was no small recommendation. By appointing as their deputy a native-born Persian of royal lineage, the sons of Abu Talib hoped to sweep into their net another great section of the population. The Persian lords who had accepted Islam and so retained their lands and power still remembered the days of Khosrau, still cherished the memories of the heroes of the past, and in Abu Muslim might see one who, though a Moslem like themselves, was also a Persian of the Persians and a scion of their Royal House. Abu Muslim was sent out from Mecca to Khorasan, there to prepare all things for the final revolution, which was to level the house of Omayya with the dust.

While the Abbasids worked in silence towards their appointed end, the Syrian Caliph seems to have remained utterly oblivious of their efforts. Government grew more difficult, the Arab colonists more quarrelsome, the Emirs more doubtful, the soldiers more undisciplined; but neither the ruler nor his ministers appear to have divined the origin and root of the evil.

Things progressed from bad to worse: riots and rebellions in Africa, rumours of revolution in Irak, defeats and disasters in distant Spain; and lastly the towns of Syria grew so completely disaffected as to oblige Merwan to retire to the secluded city of Harran and govern the Empire from thence. It was while the Caliph was thus engaged, that Abu Muslim judged the moment favourable to precipitate matters in Khorasan.

The province of Khorasan had hitherto been one of the few in which neither impostors nor fanatics had been able to disturb the peace. The inhabitants of that district, under the leadership of their feudal lords, had quietly submitted to the Moslems; the Arab colonists, who had settled in the cities and the surrounding countries, were chiefly engrossed in developing their lands and newly-acquired riches; while the ever present menace of the Turkish frontier served to keep men's minds diverted from subtleties of either religion or politics.

Hence it might have been supposed that Nasr, Merwan's

governor of Khorasan, had the easiest post of all the Caliph's lieutenants; and that Abu Muslim, the secret envoy of the Abbasids, was entrusted with the most difficult task in achieving his overthrow. But Abu Muslim awaited his opportunity; and it came, as opportunities often come in the East, in a ridiculous and unexpected manner.

Nasr had been governor of Khorasan since the early days of Hisham, and among the Arab colonists he had ever favoured the men of his own tribe, the tribe of Modhar, and neglected to promote the men of Azd and other clans who had been settled since the time of Mohallab's governorship. Gradually these Arabs began to grow jealous, and complained to their leaders of the unfairness of the governor's promotions.

The chief representative of the Arabs who did not belong to the governor's tribe was a certain Shaykh, named Jodair al-Kermani, of the tribe of Azd: a fat, well-seeming man, greatly respected by his followers, held in high public esteem, and, perhaps, not a little conscious of the dignity of his position. When he heard the complaints of his fellow tribesmen, he answered them, saying: "Retire and hold your peace, for I will reason with Nasr."

On the following day the stout representative mounted his horse, and proceeded to the governor's palace with all the pomp and ceremony of a leading Emir. Presently he obtained audience and laid the complaints before Nasr, adding with some solemnity, "I speak thus, fearing rivalry among the Moslems!"

Nasr was overwhelmed with fury and cut the audience short, crying: "Who art thou to speak thus!" and ordered Kermani to be cast into prison. When the news was bruited abroad that Kermani was in gaol, the Arabs of the tribe of Rabi'a and Azd were filled with rage, and decided to rescue their patron. Accordingly a party of them proceeded in the night to assist him to escape from the prison by a secret passage. Unluckily the passage was exceedingly narrow, and the venerable Kermani more than usually stout; and it was only at the risk of suffocation and death that the unfortunate man was dragged out by his friends and slaves. But at length, after much pushing and thrusting, he was eventually released, set on a mule, and carried to his home.

In the morning Nasr learned of the rescue, and perhaps regretting his former violence, sent the captain of the guard with a conciliatory message to the outraged Kermani; but the Shaykh had been provoked beyond endurance and would hear of no apologies. "If thou wert not a numskull," he roared, "I would give thee a lesson in conduct!" "Do you threaten me?" answered the Captain of the Guard, angrily. "If thou wert not my guest," answered Kermani, swelling with rage, "I would put thee in thy place. Go to that son of a thief, thy master, O enemy of God, and tell him what thou wilt, for truly I care not for either of ye!" The Captain withdrew abashed and reported to Nasr, who, beginning to grow uneasy at the turn of events, decided to despatch the most famous general in Khorasan, named Isma, to assuage the injured dignity of Kermani. Isma, having presented himself to the angry Shaykh, began to speak with honeyed accents, protesting, apologising, flattering and soothing by turns; but Kermani would have none of it, and interrupted the ambassador with furious words. "Son of a harlot with choice of a hundred fathers, verily thou speakest thus to boast to Nasr. Assuredly if thou wert not my guest I would strike off thy head." And Isma retired to Nasr, saying, "Never have I seen so furious a fellow, and he has gathered about him seven hundred horsemen armed cap-à-pie!"

In vain did Nasr endeavour to calm the rage of Kermani; each ambassador was received with grosser words and more contumely than the last. Finally Kermani sent a message to Nasr, telling him to leave his post and hand over the government. Nasr was now filled with apprehension, and calling his counsellors together asked them what he had better do. The advice tendered him on that occasion will give some idea of the condition of affairs. "O Emir," said one, "if thou art certain of slaying Kermani, attack him; if thou hast any doubt, let us empty the treasury and flee!" But Nasr was not a man to submit thus tamely to the angry upbraidings of a tribal Shaykh; losing all patience, he summoned his troops, and, calling the captain of the guard, said, "Go fetch that raft-punter here, for he insults us." The captain of the guard galloped off to the house of Kermani, where the men of the tribe of Azd were gathered. There he halted and shouted,

"Tell that son of a barge pole to come out, for the governor wants him!" Whereupon the men of Azd were enraged, raving back in defiance, "Son of a pimp, is it thus thou speakest of a Shaykh of the Shaykhs?" Swords were drawn, and the battle engaged. The captain of the guard was slain, and the town set in an uproar. Nasr withdrew his troops from the city to prepare for battle. Abu Muslim, who had all this time waited patiently in silence, sent a messenger to Kermani, telling him to fear nothing, and that the whole country was on his side.

Nasr realised, when too late, where the true danger lay; his troops deserted in hundreds, his counsellors vanished from his side, and in a few days Abu Muslim unfurled the black banner of rebellion—black for the mourning for Hasan and Husein—black for the Royal house of ancient Persia—black as a contrast to the Omayyad white—black for the colour of the Abbasid family. Nasr vainly endeavoured to stem the tide, and, having tried and failed, sent word to the Caliph, at Harran, that Khorasan was lost to the Empire.

On receipt of the news Merwan endeavoured to strike a blow by ordering the seizure and imprisonment of the three Abbasid brothers. Only one, Ibrahim, was secured, and his instant execution did nothing to allay the turmoil. His two brothers, Abdallah and Ja'far, had escaped to Irak.

The rebellion now spread over the Eastern provinces like a desert fire in summer. In every town Omayyad governors deserted to the rising party or were massacred in their palaces; and thousands of Persians, Shias, Kharijites, and legitimists thronged to the black standard of Abu Muslim, who was the presiding genius of the insurrection. Merwan, learning of the defeat of Nasr, called upon Ibn Hobaira, the governor of Irak, to march north and meet the rebels. Ibn Hobaira replied that he must first secure Kufa. But before the Syrian forces could occupy even this town, it had been seized by an army of Persians 30,000 strong. Events now marched with great rapidity. Abdallah, the son of Abbas, was proclaimed Commander of the Faithful, and the first rightful Caliph since the death of the Prophet. The towns of Irak were decked with the black flags of Abu Muslim; and in a short time, from Merv to Mecca, there

was hardly a city or camp where the son of Abbas was not recognised as a rightful Prince.

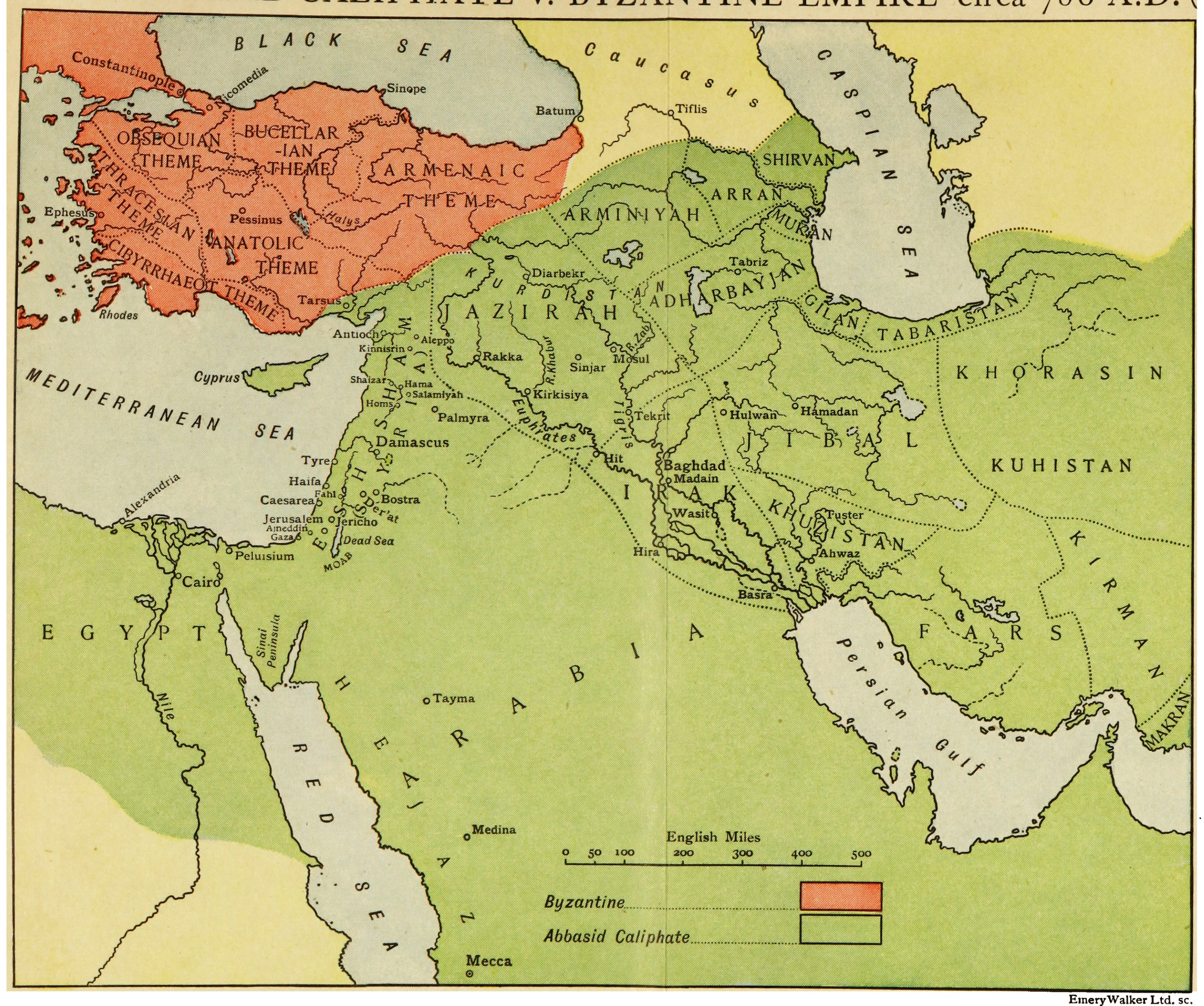
Merwan learned in dismay of this fatal and disastrous turn of events, hesitated for a moment as to whether he should not call on the Christian Emperor of Constantinople for assistance, then, abandoning the idea as disgraceful to a Moslem Prince, marshalled such troops as he could find and set out from Harran to Mosul.

At Mosul the Omayyad Caliph obtained some slight reinforcements and pushed on southward towards Basra. On the banks of the Zab the Abbasid and Omayyad forces met, and there the final battle was set out. Merwan led his men in person, and at first achieved some success; but the loss of his horse in the mêlée causing the rumour that he had been slain, his men gave way to panic which nothing could stay. Whole divisions went over to the enemy, others fled and were drowned in the river; while Merwan himself was dragged away by a few faithful followers, leaving the Abbasids in full possession of the field.

After the battle had been lost, the unfortunate Merwan was able to make good his escape from the leisurely pursuit of his enemies. He retired to Harran in hopes of making one last effort to retrieve his fallen fortunes. Finding neither friends nor supporters there, he fell back on Damascus; but the gates of his capital were closed against him, and he was perforce obliged to retire on to Egypt. The brown-skinned people of the Nile Valley showed no desire to rally round the deposed Prince. In his further retreat his few followers deserted him, his wives and children were carried off, his baggage train dispersed, and at last the all-powerful Caliph became a solitary refugee. Some Abbasid troops wandering in the Fayum saw a slave shoeing a worn-out horse. "Whose steed is that?" "Merwan's," replied the slave, indicating the church where the unhappy man was hidden. The soldiers rushed to the door, which opened and disclosed Merwan armed and ready to fight. Before this noble picture of unconquered pride, "Slay him," shouted an officer. And, after a short struggle, the last of the Omayyad Caliphs was no more; his head was struck off, and sent as quickly as men and horses could carry it to Abu-l-Abbas the Caliph.

The last scene of the tragedy of the Omayyads was horrible

THE ABBASID CALIPHATE v. BYZANTINE EMPIRE circa 786 A.D. (VII)



indeed : the bones of the dead Caliphs were burned and scattered to the winds, while all living males of the family were collected and gathered together in the presence of Abu-l-Abbas, and there by his orders massacred without mercy. Their palpitating bodies were thrown together in a heap and covered with a leather carpet ; and on this hideous table a feast was served for the new Caliph and his ministers. At last Hasan and Husein were avenged, and the Omayyad house was extinct.

# CHAPTER XIX

## THE HOUSE OF ABBAS

749–775 A.D. 132–158 A.H.

### *Abu-l-Abbas and Mansur*

THUS the first portion of the great "Mystery" came to an end. The black standard of the Abbasid descended like a pall on the dead of the house of Omayya; the first Moslem Empire dissolved, and the second arose from its ashes. The ever-burning fires of the old world, which had been eclipsed by the phantasm of Arabian dominion, at last dissipated the mirage of the desert; and the active forces of Eastern history, superficially changed but fundamentally the same, once more began to make themselves felt with irresistible strength. The Arabs swept out of the desert, imposed their language, their creed, and some of their manners on millions of men, some with whom they were distantly related, some utterly strange, some their ancient foes. To these they had given rulers of their own kind for a generation; they had brought about a partial fusion of people; they had displaced a number of priests and lords; they had moved great cities by half a score of leagues; they had devastated certain tracts of land; and they had at last engulfed themselves in the world they had apparently conquered. The struggle between the house of Omayya and the house of Abbas was nominally a futile party or tribal war between two Arabian clans: in reality, it was the struggle between the declining forces of the Arabs and the cosmopolitan forces of Islam. True, the nature of the contest is obscured by a multitude of details which distract and confuse, since in the party cries of the Abbasids we find the watchwords of the legitimist, the purist, and the fanatic, while in the last rally of Merwan we hear of

intrigues with Christian Emperors, concessions to non-Moslem subjects, and of marriages with Persian and Grecian women. Yet in effect the unspoken, and perhaps at that time unspeakable, ideas which impelled the combatants to a final and merciless war of extinction, were, on one hand, a determination to maintain a government centred in an Arabian oligarchy at Damascus, and on the other, the undefined wish to replace it by a cosmopolitan Caliphate representative of the Turkish, Persian, Kurdish, Caucasian, Aramean and Armenian peoples who had been swept into the folds of the mantle of the Prophet.

The extermination of the Omayyads did not, as may well be imagined, put a period to the wars and revolutions which had distracted the Empire. It required all the ability of the Persian Abu Muslim, and all the severity of the Caliph Abu-l-Abbas to keep the new dynasty in place and prevent the commonwealth from subsiding into hopeless and complete anarchy. True, the ancient rulers had been swept from the face of the earth, and the Abbasids were without opponents or rivals; but purposeless turbulence remained—one of those evil gifts which the early Arabs had bequeathed to their mixed posterity in Asia.

It would be profitless and uninteresting to delay the reader with a minute record of the multitude of useless rebellions and bloody reprisals which distinguished the first years of the new Empire. Let it suffice to say that when Abu-l-Abbas died in 136, the greater part of his dominion had been subdued and owed allegiance to the new dynasty. One by one the generals of Merwan had been disposed of, the outlying provinces in India and Turkestan had been re-attached to the main portion of the Empire, the ever-recurring rebellions grew less and less frequent, the loyalty of the great mass of the people more assured, and the acceptance of the Abbasids as part of the immutable scheme of things a more and more popular opinion.

In destroying and effacing all traces of Omayyad rule, the first of the Abbasid Caliphs committed two errors, whose nature at the time it was perhaps impossible for him to have perceived, but which nevertheless were soon destined to declare themselves. The first lay in the promotion of popular leaders of non-Arabian origin; the second, in the neglect of sea-power and control of the Mediterranean. Hardly had Abu-l-Abbas

departed this life than his successor, Mansur, found himself confronting two serious dangers, both directly arising from those mistakes in policy on the part of his predecessor to which we have just drawn attention. Owing to his having no navy, North Africa was in full rebellion and utterly beyond his control; while in Spain a solitary surviving Omayyad prince was declared independent Caliph, without the Abbasids being able to protest either by word or deed. On the other hand, the Persian general, Abu Muslim, began to assume an attitude rather more akin to that of the master than the servant of the Commander of the Faithful.

The chances of recovering the lost provinces in Spain were too remote to encourage the Abbasids to make any attempt to pursue their hatred against the fortunate refugee, who had obtained not only sanctuary but a throne in that distant country. A vain attempt to recover North Africa by landward expeditions ended in a nominal conquest and the actual foundation of a new kingdom by the general entrusted with the expeditions, since it was impossible to administer that littoral or maintain an army along it without the aid of a powerful navy. However, the more pressing question of the power and independence of Abu Muslim was one with which the new dynasty was able to cope in a time-honoured and ancient fashion. Abu Muslim had been the soul and strength of the revolution. One half of the Eastern provinces he had conquered with his own hand, while the strategic combinations and political intrigues which had brought to fruition the schemes for ultimate victory had been initiated by his advice or with his approval. As this General became more and more popular, his power increased to such a dangerous degree that Mansur began to perceive in him, not the saviour of his house, the main support of his dominion and chief defence against rebellion and conquest, but a dangerous and crafty enemy who might at any moment usurp the throne upon which he had placed his patron.

Mansur, although only the second of his race to hold the office of Caliph, had already learned those arts and maxims, the observance of which is the only guarantee of a Prince's true security. He marked down Abu Muslim for destruction with a calm and reasoned mercilessness which is peculiar to

certain types of men whom fortune occasionally chances to make absolute Princes. Abu Muslim, now in the zenith of his power, appeared quite oblivious of the cold and jealous regard with which his new master viewed him ; and the Abbasid Caliph had still some work for the instrument he had decided to dispense with.

Abdallah, the uncle of Abu-l-Abbas, enraged at being once more debarred from the throne by a second nephew, endeavoured to seize the office of Caliph by force. Rallying his party under the banner of revolution, he declared himself Commander of the Faithful and established his court in northern Mesopotamia, whither flocked the shattered remnants of the disbanded Omayyad forces, and multitudes of disaffected persons from all parts of the Empire.

Mansur, confronted with this serious rising at the outset of his reign, called upon Abu Muslim to stretch out his hand to save the Empire he had made. Abu Muslim obeyed, and fell upon the rebels at Nisibis. The brilliant genius of the Persian soon outwitted the feeble manœuvres of his master's uncle. Abdallah surrendered, his army dispersed, and Mansur's succession was assured.

The moment the Caliph felt himself safely established on the throne, he turned once more to the project of ridding himself of Abu Muslim. The solution of the problem that presented itself to Mansur lay in the discovery of the exact method by which he could rid himself of Abu Muslim, without presenting too abject an example of treachery and ingratitude to the world at large. The tyrant's first business was to provoke his faithful servant to a just exclamation of indignation which might be construed into a mutinous attitude. A suitable method for irritating the powerful general was soon discovered. The Commander of the Faithful expressed a wish that Abu Muslim should take command and charge of Egypt and Syria, the ostensible reason for issuing the order being that Abu Muslim was indispensable to the Imperial Council, and that it was desirable that he should occupy a post in close proximity to it. In reality the object of the mandate was to divorce Abu Muslim from those peoples by whom he was loved, and from those provinces in which he was feared.

Abu Muslim, long unaccustomed to peremptory and distasteful commands, refused to receive the office to which he had been appointed, and bluntly told the messengers of Mansur that the enemies of the Abbasids had been dispersed, and that when the immediate services of a Vizier were no longer necessary for the safety of a dynasty it were better for the minister to dwell far beyond the precincts of the court. Without waiting for the Caliph's reply Abu Muslim set out for the north-east, where hitherto men obeyed the Abbasids because he was their friend.

In deliberately provoking the anger of Abu Muslim, Mansur had not acted rashly; before venturing to irritate his trusted servant the prince prepared the ground with pains and care. Those Emirs who regarded Abu Muslim as a rival were promised promotion and wealth if they did but stand by the Prince; the governorship of Khorasan was disposed of, and a governor installed therein, long before Abu Muslim was appointed to Egypt; while the fidelity of the very troops, who under his leadership had just conquered northern Mesopotamia, was undermined. Abu Muslim realised the nature of the trap into which he had fallen, not suddenly, but by degrees. First he learned that he might be pursued. No matter, he would endeavour to fly to Khorasan. Then came the news from Khorasan that its people were overawed by troops from Irak. No matter, the army of Mesopotamia would relieve them. Alas! the army of Mesopotamia was ready to desert at any moment. Abu Muslim turned from one side to the other like a caged animal, desperate and despairing; his counsellors, secretly in the employ of the Caliph, pointed out each difficulty, laying stress on the hopelessness of Abu Muslim's case and the power of the Commander of the Faithful.

To the craft and guile of Mansur there was no limit. He had schooled himself not only in the diplomacy and oratory of the desert, but also in the subtle treachery of Persia. He was, perhaps, incapable of leading an army; but the destruction of his greatest supporter was a matter of no difficulty to him. Having shaken Abu Muslim's self-confidence and enfeebled his power of rapid decision, Mansur now attacked him in different fashion. Letters came, bidding Abu Muslim be of good cheer, telling him that promotion and honour awaited him if he would but

obey; and though hints were thrown out that disobedience would be followed by swift and relentless punishment, yet the Caliph bound himself by the most sacred oaths to respect his enemy's person and office if he did but yield. Abu Muslim, so long accustomed to rely on his own judgment, and so long trusted and beloved by his masters, was at a loss as to how he should act. Hesitatingly he commanded his army to turn towards Rumiya, where the Caliph was encamped. Slowly the general approached the court; silently Mansur awaited him. At two days' distance Abu Muslim halted in agony and uncertainty. The corrupt lieutenants and false counsellors who surrounded him urged him to proceed. Mansur still waited in patience. Abu Muslim turned to one comrade who alone had not been made a party to the Caliph's intrigues. "What counsel, O Malik," he cried. "O Abu Muslim, good counsel hast thou left behind thee—slay Mansur when you meet him. Better breakfast on the Caliph than the Caliph sup on us." "It is difficult," muttered Abu Muslim, and he gave the order to proceed to Rumiya. At Rumiya Mansur waited, silent, dignified, impenetrable. By his orders the Imperial troops welcomed Abu Muslim's army with honour and rejoicings; busy messengers thronged around the newly-arrived chieftain's tent bearing letters of congratulation. Highly placed courtiers fawned upon him, rejoicing in the favour they said he had found with the Commander of the Faithful. Abu Muslim's officers were distracted with feasts and shows, his army belauded and given largesse. Rumiya resounded with merrymakings and greetings.

Amid all this blurred pageantry, we see two figures standing out with startling distinctness; the one, Mansur, awful, lonely, still and thoughtful; the other, Abu Muslim, uncertain, doubtful, and wondering. What shall Abu Muslim do? What is written in the heart of the King? To slay the Prince would be to strike down that which he had set up; to flee to court an ignominious end; to stay—what if he stayed? Could Mansur break his oath? Could the Imam, the regent of God, spill the blood of his boldest warrior, his wisest minister? It was while buried in such thoughts as these that Abu Muslim was suddenly called upon to visit the Caliph in his palace. At the audience

Mansur made merry and laughed, but Abu Muslim was morose and anxious. At length Abu Muslim was given permission to withdraw. Scarcely crediting his fortune, he returned to his tents. The next day Mansur called Abu Muslim to audience once more. Again the Caliph was gentle and kind. The two men were alone. "O Abu Muslim, is that sword of thine the famous blade thou didst capture amidst the booty of Abdallah?" "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful." "Let me feel it and hold it."

Abu Muslim handed over his weapon; the Caliph slipped it beneath the cushions. "O Abu Muslim, why didst thou disobey me, and why hast thou rebelled?" "Never did I rebel, O Commander of the Faithful. Truly, I feared thee, hoping that time would appease thine anger."

The pent-up fury and jealousy broke the bonds that imprisoned them in the Caliph's breast. "O Abu Mujrim—O father of shame, woe is thee. Thou hast an answer for all riddles." So saying, he clapped his hands. The tapestries were suddenly pulled aside, and four warriors, sword in hand, rushed into the room. Abu Muslim rose to his feet. "Commander of the Faithful, slay not thy servant, he may yet serve thee." "Woe is thee. I have not in the world a foe I fear as I fear thee. Lay on, strike!" The swords flashed in the air and Abu Muslim fell, a leg severed by a savage cut. "Maim him, hand and foot," urged the Caliph; and his bloody orders were obeyed. "Hew off his head," cried the tyrant, glutting his hatred against the builder of his throne. When the hideous deed was accomplished, the mutilated corpse of the founder of the fortunes of the House of Abbas was wrapped in a rug. "How many," said Mansur, looking on the ghastly bundle, "how many did this father of shame slay in our service?" "600,000, it is said," came the answer. Then the Caliph laughed; and laughing, he extemporised these lines:

> "Thy long owed debt is paid to me and mine,
> Now hast thou drained the cup of gall and brine
> That thou didst brew for others, son of crime."

. . . . . .

The dominant note of Mansur's character was selfishness of

an almost superhuman kind. He slew Abu Muslim in cold blood. Years after, he remarked that he regretted having done so, since Abu Muslim might have proved useful to him in later times. This commentary of the Caliph gives us a picture of callous egotism which is almost sublime. That the Commander of the Faithful bitterly regretted his unfortunate minister's death is easy to believe. The years of Mansur's reign were continually troubled by the storms of war, anarchy, rebellion and schism.

Mansur's first thought was to compensate his Empire for the loss of his Spanish and African provinces by a serious campaign against the Greeks. An army of 70,000 men was launched against the Taurus frontier, and the city of Malatia was besieged and taken.

The student may deduce from this military operation the change which had come over the Moslem world. The attack on the Greek Empire was no longer sustained by raids of irregular horse through the Cilician gates, and piratical excursions among the Greek Islands, but was developed by the slow and tedious action of masses of infantry operating in mountainous country. Gone are the scurrying horsemen of Khalid-ibn-Walid, neglected are the fleets of Mo'awiya ; the armies of Mansur are not truly the armies of the Arabs, but in fact the forces of Khosrau revived and regenerated. Consequently the jars and shocks of war are felt recurring along the older lines of the inland highways. History resumes its normal course, and the Arabian episode in Asia is concluded.

Although Mansur was called the Commander of the Faithful, his policy was that of a Sassanian king of kings. Although his Emirs were mostly of Arabian origin in the male line, not a few of them were Turks or Persians, who, like the Barmecides, did not shame to trace their pedigree to the Persian Barons ; while the armies are no longer nomad tribes, plundering, settling and colonising where they list, but regular forces of horse and foot, in which no doubt we might find a motley array of Kurds, Persians, Armenians and Turkish soldiers, such as fought Xerxes under the Surenas, and under Khosrau.

If, however, the Caliphate was assimilating to itself the methods of the ancient Persian Empires in temporal matters,

it differed from them in the spiritual relations which bound it to its subjects.

In ancient Persia the State Church was separated to a great degree from the administration, while under the Caliphs the State and Church were one, consequently schism and rebellion, orthodoxy and loyalty, were indistinguishable. This confusion between administration and religion was in itself a great weakness in the structure of the Abbasid state, for a wandering impostor, a forged pedigree, or the distortion of vague tradition were trifles which might at any moment shake the throne to the very foundations. Among the multitudes who had been shepherded into the Moslem fold there were spread the dormant seeds of exploded philosophies, moribund religions, decayed superstitions and half-forgotten beliefs. These now began to blossom and flourish amid the descendants of Manichaeans, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Atheists, Pantheists and Pagans, who, at the dagger's point, had gabbled the "fatiha," and having trolled out unknown prayers in an unknown tongue, at certain intervals, were for this slight service accepted as soldiers of God and brothers of their conquerors. Amidst the first hurly-burly of the holy wars, the incompleteness and vagueness of the Moslem propaganda had passed unnoticed; but now that the Empire had settled down into a more normal position, the dissonant elements in its spiritual composition began to make themselves felt.

In Arabia we find three great causes of strife: firstly, the followers of the descendants of Ali, who yearned for a legitimate Imam of the holy house; secondly, the Bedawin, who dreamed that the world might once more centre around Mecca and Medina; thirdly, those Arabs who had retained untainted traditions of Mohammed, and who longed to revive an austere and unbending puritanism such as the first Caliphs would have approved. But the sense of disunion, disappointment, and dissatisfaction which was spreading in Arabia was but a negligible quantity compared with the confusion and anarchy which reigned in the minds of the Moslems of the east, where there were Moslems who accepted Islam as but a re-statement of the dualistic creed, Moslems who accepted Mohammed as but a unit in an unending sequence of incarnations of the Deity,

Moslems who secretly worshipped fire as a symbol of Allah, Moslems who said with their lips "There is no God but Allah," and in their hearts, "Allah is not," Moslems who tied rags to trees, Moslems who worshipped stones, Moslems who worshipped Ali as God, Moslems who accepted Mohammed as Daniel, Elijah, or John the Baptist; Moslems who knew neither Allah nor Mohammed, Moslems who spoke any one of a hundred tongues but Arabic, and believed any one of a hundred misstatements of the creed of Mohammed rather than his actual words.

If the curious complexity of the religious situation is but realised, it is not difficult for the student to understand why it was that peace seldom reigned in the Empire, and that any discontented official, religious vagabond, or strolling madman could in a short time collect a desperate following ready to believe that he was the son of Ali, a Messiah, a Prophet, an incarnation or a manifestation of God.

Soon after the death of Abu Muslim, Mansur himself had experience of two common forms of religious upheavals which continually afflicted the Empire, the one in a Persian heresy, the other by a revival of Arabian Puritanism. The first instance was an outbreak among a body of Persian troops, who had become imbued with the idea that Mansur himself was an incarnation of the Deity. At first the error of his followers was to the Caliph rather satisfactory than otherwise. When the learned held up their hands in pious horror saying, "These unbelievers blaspheme," Mansur replied that he preferred blasphemers who would be damned for their fidelity to traitors who might some day dwell in Paradise! However, it soon became apparent to the Prince that, unless he checked this exuberant devotion, the sterner Moslems who surrounded him would take measures of repression incompatible with his personal safety. The Commander of the Faithful was therefore obliged to request the Persian sectaries to desist from paying him divine honours. This command was followed by an unexpected development. Without relinquishing their belief, the heretics came to the conclusion that Mansur was unworthy of the blessing of which they pretended he was the recipient, and decided to slay him in order that the Deity might be re-

incarnated as soon as possible in a more suitable human body. The result of this inconvenient determination ended in a bloody revolution, during which the fanatics besieged Mansur in his castle of Hashimiya, where he lay for a time in the direst peril; nor were the rebels finally dispersed and massacred until the army operating in the Taurus had been recalled for the purpose of restoring order in Irak.

The rebellion of the Rawendis or the affair of Hashimiya, as this extraordinary outbreak of fanaticism may be called, exhibited to Mansur and his advisers the indiscipline of the troops, and the eagerness for disorder and religious excitement of the peoples of the cities of Irak in the plainest fashion; and the fact was borne in upon them that if the Empire was to endure, or the dynasty survive, the construction of a new capital was essential. Irak was now the strategic base of the Empire, since from Irak armies could be launched against the Christians of the north-west and the Khazars of the north-east; while from Irak alone could a ruler at one and the same time control Arabia, Syria and Persia. Therefore the new capital had to be fixed within the limits of that province.

Following the guidance of his Persian predecessors and perhaps a natural commercial and political instinct, Mansur chose the site of his new capital in the small village of Baghdad, in the neighbourhood of the ruins of Ctesiphon. However, he had barely made the arrangements for the foundation of the new capital than his attention was diverted to Arabia, where a formidable conspiracy was suddenly brought to light.

One of the forces which the Abbasids had employed to crush the house of Mo'awiya had been the devotion, affection and superstitious reverence with which a certain number of Moslems scattered throughout the Empire had regarded the house of Ali.

The descendants of the luckless son-in-law of the Prophet, though never apparently capable of leading an army to victory or initiating a successful revolution, had ever been inspired with a fatal and desperate hope of ultimate success. For a moment, when they were used as pawns in the Abbasid game, their

expectations ran high ; but as the years passed on, it became plain that the sons of Abbas had as little regard for the sacred lineage of the sons of Ali as they had for the Syrian Caliphs. Ever since Mansur had established himself on the throne he had looked on the family of Ali with marked suspicion, and took no pains to disguise his fear of Abdallah and his sons Mohammed and Ibrahim, the direct descendants of Hasan the martyr. Abdallah was old, but both his sons were young, vigorous and intelligent, and it was these two men whom Mansur had marked down as the objects of his greatest apprehension and distrust, causing their every movement to be watched, their friends to be spied upon, and their houses and families kept under the strictest observation. At last both Mohammed and Ibrahim grew aweary of the persecution and decided to abandon their homes and conceal themselves by travelling under varying disguise, subsisting on the hospitality of their supporters, trusting to providence and the fidelity of their partisans to protect them from the machinations of Mansur. If the Caliph had been uneasy while he yet had the objects of his guilty fear under his eye, now that they had escaped from the view of his police and ministers his terror redoubled. Sometimes the brothers were reported in Persia ; occasionally tidings came of their suspected sojourn in the tents of the desert. At one time news was brought of their being in Egypt ; at others, they were suspected of actually harbouring in the towns of Irak ; and ever with intelligence of their wanderings came rumours of incipient mutiny, the hatching of plots, the fostering of rebellions, and the secret meetings of their followers. The Caliph exerted his powers to the utmost, offering bribes and rewards to traitors at one moment, persecuting and robbing their devoted followers at another ; but all without avail. Mohammed and Ibrahim still remained at large ; in fact the two descendants of Ali inspired far greater apprehension in the breasts of their opponents by remaining in concealment, than they could have done by boldly leading a rebellion. Mansur was completely baffled : the governors who were sent to Medina and Egypt returned empty-handed ; the general who was despatched to break up their organisation in North Persia joined hands with the rebels, and was only defeated and slain after a serious campaign ; while the

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brothers remained at large wandering wheresoever they wished, yet always safe from the clutches of the Caliph.

Mansur came to the conclusion that if he would capture his enemies he must employ a different type of man from those at that time in his service. For his lieutenants were open to two objections: either they were true Moslems, in which case they hesitated to pursue or capture members of the holy family; or they were ambitious, and might dream of playing the part of a second Abu Muslim for the advancement of an Alid Dynasty. Mansur cast about him for one who, though neither rigidly orthodox nor aggressively ambitious, was yet a man of capacity and determination. At last he found the object of his search in a Bedawi of the tribe of Morra named Riyah, a simple unsophisticated warrior of the desert, who knew little of theology or affairs of state. When the wildling was brought before Mansur, the Caliph said to him: "O Riyah, truly thou hast no claim of kinship or blood on me, and there is nothing between us; neither canst thou make any demand upon me for favour or promotion. Therefore do I charge thee with this business of seizing the sons of Abdallah. Therefore, also, do I make thee governor of Mecca and Medina." "If thou wouldst capture the boys, Commander of the Faithful, let us torture their father till he tell us where they are hidden," blurted out the plain-spoken child of the desert. "Abdallah" replied the Caliph sententiously, "is an old and reverend man whom we respect." Riyah withdrew, and perhaps marvelling at the stupidity and complexity of town life, set out for Medina. The moment he arrived at the Holy City he sent for Abdallah and said to him: "The Commander of the Faithful has sent me to seize your sons. If I cannot find them, assuredly I will do thee to death." Having delivered this message, he called the townsfolk into the great mosque. "Men of Medina," he cried from the pulpit, "I have come for the sons of Abdallah. He who harbours them I will torture, he who betrays them I will reward; for Mohammed is a miscreant rogue and Ibrahim is a rebellious malefactor, and both are the sons of a pimp's wife." When the citizens heard the holy family abused after this foul fashion, they cried out, "Allah! Allah!" and groaned with horror; whereupon Riyah turned on them, saying: "I have spoken thus

to discover whether you would grow angry. You have shown your thought, and I am assured that ye are all guilty. Therefore I shall ask the Caliph for permission to burn your city, so that I may destroy those whom I seek and you along with them!" With these words Riyah retired from the mosque, leaving the people of Medina confounded with fear.

The rough words of the desert man had their desired effect. That night Mohammed and Ibrahim wandered from door to door begging for admittance; which was refused by the terrified householders, who, while protesting loyalty, begged them to depart elsewhere, lest the furious governor should discover them and ruin the town.

The unfortunate brothers sought asylum in the desert; but there Riyah was on his own ground, and small parties of horse scoured from camp to camp, and from waterhole to waterhole, questioning, searching and pursuing. In despair Mohammed prayed his father Abdallah permission to surrender, and so end the unequal strife. "Courage," counselled Abdallah, "God may yet deliver His people by thy hand." So Mohammed resumed his wanderings, taking with him his son Ali, who, though but a child, was deemed old enough to bear the burden of misery and intrigue which was the hereditary lot of the Alid race. Pressed by the relentless pursuit of Riyah, the three descendants of the last of Alis separated, Mohammed remaining in Hejaz Ibrahim hiding in Basra, while the little Ali took refuge in Egypt. So closely did the governor of Medina keep on the heels of his quarry, that, though he could not lay hands on any one of those he sought for, yet he kept Mansur informed of their movements.

The first to be apprehended was Ali, the boy. By starvation and torture Mansur soon drew from the wretched lad all that he knew, and was so alarmed at the information thus obtained that he proceeded immediately to Medina, accompanied by a strong force. On his arrival the nobles of the city came forth to do him honour, among them the aged Abdallah. "Where are thy sons, father of Mohammed?" said the Caliph. "Commander of the Faithful, they fear to approach thee," answered the patriarch. "Why then do they conspire against me, as Ali, the boy, bears witness?" questioned the Caliph. Abdallah's

eyes filled with tears. "Ali is a child, and has been tortured beyond his strength. He lied to ease his pain." Then Mansur smiled and called forth one named Oqba, whom Abdallah recognised as a man who had stayed in his house under the guise of the friend and supporter of his sons. Realising that the man he had trusted with all his secrets was but the spy of his enemy, Abdallah gave way, and, flinging himself on the ground, cried out for mercy. "May God not pardon me if I pardon thee," roared the Caliph, and, after having given orders to his servants to make ready for departure, that he might accomplish the pilgrimage to Mecca, he commanded Riyah to imprison the whole of the Alid family during his absence.

Riyah obeyed the Caliph's injunctions; and in a few days the whole of the family, men, women and children, had been secured, the old Abdallah, the wives of Mohammed and Ibrahim, their sons, relations and slaves. Mansur returned from the pilgrimage, but did not choose to enter Medina. He established his camp a day's journey away and ordered the prisoners to be brought to him. Riyah caused his prisoners to be led out of the town mounted on camels, loaded with chains, bareheaded, and dressed in rags. For a night and a day they were kept waiting outside the Caliph's tent without food or water. At last Mansur decided to question Abdallah. "Where are thy sons?" "I know not," replied the old man. The Caliph was filled with rage. "By God," he cried, "had I them here I would slay them before your eyes!" Then, in helpless fury, he ordered the poor wretch to be lashed with whips till he fainted. When Abdallah came to his senses his parched tongue protruded from his mouth. "Moslems," he groaned, "is there not one among you who will give a cup of water to the grandson of the Prophet?" A Bedawi, who was passing, was the only one who would venture to give him a drink.

Unable to extract any further information from the unhappy prisoners, the Caliph ordered them to be flogged, weighted with extra shackles, and bade one of his Emirs escort the convoy to Kufa, whither he arranged to precede them. As the litter in which Mansur was carried passed the prisoners, Abdallah cried out: "It was not thus that Ali treated Abbas when he captured him on the field of Bedr." Consumed with fury the Commander

of the Faithful stretched his head from between the curtains and spat in Abdallah's face. The prisoners remained behind to stagger along the 600 miles of dusty, stony roads of desert which intervene between Medina and Kufa, while the Caliph's litter swayed on before them.

If proof were wanted of the desperate devotion of the family for the sons of Abdallah, it would be sufficient to cite the fact that during the whole of the time that the prisoners were being tortured and ill-used, Mohammed was concealed in Medina, and corresponded with his father from hour to hour, imploring permission to give himself up, yet always being refused.

When Mansur arrived at Kufa, he seems to have realised that neither tortures inflicted on the family of Ali, nor the severity and perseverance of the governor of Medina could accomplish the capture of Mohammed and Ibrahim. He decided, therefore, even at the risk of losing his throne, to provoke them to open rebellion, and so end an intolerable situation. Mansur was well aware that neither Mohammed nor Ibrahim would venture to have recourse to physical force unless there was some chance of success. In order, therefore, to hearten his enemies to rebellion, the Caliph decided upon a deed which should drive every follower of Ali into the field. Accordingly Abdallah and the other prisoners were beheaded on their arrival at Kufa.

Mansur's desperate strategy was complicated by another motive. His cousin Isa had been selected by the first Abbasid as Mansur's successor. Mansur longed to leave the throne to his son Mohammed. In a long and determined civil war Isa might be slain. As the Commander of the Faithful had anticipated, Mohammed emerged from his hiding place to Medina and called upon all Hejaz to follow him. Ibrahim, on the other hand, proclaimed revolution in Basra. Isa was commissioned with the command of the army destined to quell the double rebellion. Thus by one adroit crime the Caliph set the three men he most detested to battle with one another. Isa embarked upon his task with a brilliant initiative. He first took Medina and slew Mohammed without difficulty or delay, then doubled back to Irak with his army and attacked the forces under Ibrahim. Ibrahim had gathered about him an army perhaps 40,000 strong, but years of wandering as a hunted refugee had

not developed the talents or qualities necessary in a leader, and his army was, like all the rebel armies raised in Irak, divided in councils and purpose. Isa came upon Ibrahim when the latter was threatening Kufa, where Mansur was encamped; by an adroit tactical movement Isa hemmed in the rebels between a canal and the city, attacked them along a narrowed front, and contrived to signal to the garrison of Kufa to fall on them in the rear. Ibrahim was slain, his army dispersed, and the cause of the House of Ali lost.

Mansur viewed Isa's success but sourly. True, his greatest enemies were dead and his throne was more secure than it ever had been since the day of his accession; but in Isa the Caliph recognised a formidable obstacle to his son's succession, which had now become the darling project of the declining years of the Commander of the Faithful. With that supreme selfishness which, since the murder of Abu Muslim, had distinguished Mansur, the Caliph set to work to force Isa to abandon his claim to the throne. False charges were brought against the unhappy man in hopes of obtaining an excuse for ordering him to execution; poison was introduced into his food; false witnesses gave a detailed perjury regarding his pretended renunciation. But against all these devices Isa held out with unexpected stubbornness. As a last resort Isa was confronted with his favourite son. A cord was slipped around the boy's throat. "Unless thou yield'st," cried Mansur, "assuredly I will strangle him." The cord was tightened, and Isa saw his son fall senseless to the ground. After a few moments' hesitation Isa gave way, and Mansur had achieved his last desire.

Now that his enemies were scattered and his rivals rendered powerless, Mansur was able to devote the remainder of his years to the building of his chosen capital, Baghdad. Mansur hoped, when he laid out the foundations of his new city, that he would achieve stability of government by the mechanical disposition of brick work. He had noticed that confused and tortuous streets, defenceless market places, blind alleys, and isolated government buildings or offices were weapons in the hands of the disorderly, by means of which interested persons could convert a pitiful street row into a formidable faction fight within a very short space of time.

In such cities as Basra, Kufa, or Wasit, the rebellious could plot and hatch conspiracies within a stone's throw of the Imperial residence, without either soldiers or police being able to interfere. The treasury or the Palace might be attacked and taken by a hastily collected mob, before an army could come to the rescue. A dozen pretenders to the throne could hide in safety in any quarter of a city where they had adherents. It was only by a dangerous and complicated system of spies, assassins and bullies that the Caliph and his ministers could keep control of the urban population. The towns of Irak were mere disordered settlements which the soldiers, merchants, and colonists, who had obtained grants of land for various services, had built according to their varying fancies, without any general purpose or plan.

Mansur decided to build himself a city in which he thought none of these evils could ever recur, and accordingly laid out a plan conceived with the object of maintaining the people in subjection, and the Prince and his ministers in security.

The new capital which Mansur laid out was a masterpiece of despotic cunning, and autocratic strategy. Three walls enclosed a perfect circle about four miles in circumference. The outer wall was separated from the central or main wall by an open ring. Between the main wall and the inner wall lay the four quarters of the city. Within the circle enclosed by the inner wall lay a vast open space, in the centre of which stood the Imperial Palace, surrounded by the various public offices. Two roads divided the city into symmetrical quadrants, pierced the walls at opposite points and divided the four quarters one from the other.

By this simple scheme Mansur overcame half the dangers by which his throne had been menaced. The palace stood in a space sufficiently large for troops to manœuvre in without danger of being overwhelmed by an undisciplined mob. The quarters of the city were not only dominated by the main and inner walls, but were utterly separated by military barracks which flanked the roads between the inner and the outer gates. The suburbs were separated from the inner city by a deep water dyke and the outer wall.

The advantages of Mansur's plan are sufficiently obvious.

(1) The Caliph could leave the city without being obliged to pass through any street inhabited by other persons than his guards.

(2) A brawl could be localised and dealt with by the guards at the gates.

(3) By a simple process of closing the inner and outer gates the whole population could be imprisoned in a moment.

(4) Disaffected persons beyond the walls could never obtain assistance from within.

(5) No mob, whether from within or without, could approach within sight of the palace without having passed the guardians of the city gates.

(6) The city police and agents of the Caliph could obtain easy access to any house within either of the four quadrants or quarters.

(7) The whole of the public offices and official residences were centralised in one place and yet cut off from the population of the town.

In fact, if by organisation and building it were possible for a monarch to secure his throne, Mansur did so in Baghdad. Had the original scheme been adhered to, and the plan of the city of Mansur been preserved intact, doubtless the Caliphs would long have enjoyed their dominion and power. But though the Caliph might bequeath his city, he could not leave his wisdom to his successors.

The city of Baghdad was completed in 149. In 158 Mansur died, leaving the empire to his son, El Mahdi.

# CHAPTER XX

## THE ABBASIDS

775–809 A.D. 158–193 A.H.

### § 1. *El Mahdi, El Hadi and Harun-el-Rashid*

EL MAHDI ascended the throne under very different circumstances from his father and predecessor. The central administration could now be carried on from Baghdad without let or hindrance. The person of the Commander of the Faithful was more secure; the religious dangers of Persian heresy and Arabian puritanism had been reduced; the independence of the distant Emirs had been curtailed, and the whole Empire had settled down into a more fixed condition. The proof that Mansur had done much to strengthen and solidify the Empire lies in the fact that neither a revolution, headed by a popular general in Khorasan, nor a widespread schism, initiated by the impostor Mokanna, who proclaimed himself as a deity, sufficed to endanger the security of the Caliph. Both the rebellious general and the false prophet achieved some success, but they were unable to withstand the wealth and power of the united empire. The civil revolution was crushed, and the religious outbreak was stifled without unduly straining either the resources or discipline of the Empire as a whole. El Mahdi, whose nature was milder than that of Mansur, released many of the suspects and prisoners whom his father had kept in confinement, devoted his personal wealth to the improvement of the accommodation along the pilgrims' road to Mecca and Medina, and maintained the internal peace by engaging the minds of the Moslems in an annual foray into the lands of the Christian Emperors of Constantinople.

There seems to have been very little purpose in the tactics or

strategy of either the Moslems or Christians during this unending campaign in Asia Minor. When the Empire of the Caliphs was torn with revolution, civil wars, schisms and riots, the Greeks appeared incapable of wresting back a single province or recovering a solitary town. On the other hand, when the city of Constantinople was ruled by "a woman and a child," as Gibbon scornfully describes the joint government of Irene and Porphyrogenitus, the gigantic armies of the Caliphs could effect nothing permanent on the plateau of Asia Minor. To sack a city or overthrow an Imperial army and retire was the highest achieve- of the Abbasid arms. To ravage North Syria or to hem in and capture an isolated Saracen force, the most permanent victory the Greeks ever attempted. Indeed, the war between Islam and Christendom, as it was waged between the Abbasids and Byzantines, grew to be rather an institution than a contest. Neither side seemed to hope for final victory; either could be bought off by the other when the struggle became too acute. Indeed, it would appear as if the Greeks looked upon the provinces lost by Heraclius as irrecoverable, while the Caliphs perhaps viewed a chronic war on their western frontier in the light of a useful and amusing entertainment.

It may be that the Moslem Caliphs realised that if they conquered Asia Minor and captured Constantinople they would have been unable to remain in Baghdad; and that if they left Baghdad, Persia and Khorasan would be lost. While the Christian Emperors must have known very well that, even if their armies could penetrate the Abbasid frontiers in a dozen places, they could not find a convenient frontier west of the Bezabdeh—Singara—Khabur line demarcated by Diocletian; and to have reached that ancient boundary was a task far beyond the financial powers of Constantinople in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Towards the close of his reign El Mahdi began to conceive a far greater affection for his younger son, Harun, than he had hitherto borne for his heir, Musa-el-Hadi. Harun was beautiful, affectionate, brave, and intelligent. Musa, cold, indisciplined, and self-willed. Harun, though but a boy, had led the victorious armies of his father to the banks of the Bosphorus, and had returned home laden with plunder and spoil, while Musa was engaged in the profitless and unpicturesque task of guarding the

north-eastern frontier and controlling the rebellious inhabitants of Jurjan and Tabaristan. El Mahdi decided to endeavour to prevail upon Musa to give up his claim to the succession in favour of Harun. Musa refused. The angry father was about to approach his rebellious son in order to oblige him to relinquish his heritage, when El Mahdi suddenly sickened, and died.

Whether Musa actually caused his father to be poisoned or no is a matter of some doubt; but there is not a little probability that he was quite capable of this sinister deed, since within a short time after his succession he endeavoured to obtain the assassination of his brother Harun, and at the same time introduced poison into a dish of food he sent to his mother, Khaizran. This barbarous deed brought its own punishment. The man commissioned with the murder of the young Caliph's brother concealed himself, one night, in that portion of the Palace where Harun was accustomed to sleep. There he waited in hiding until all was still, intending to despatch his victim and withdraw unperceived. Suddenly he heard the voice of Khaizran calling upon Harun-el-Rashid. From his place of concealment the assassin saw Harun rise from his bed and leave the apartment. Stealthily the bravo followed the prince, who walked towards the sound of his mother's voice. Presently the man came all unperceived on the Princess speaking with her son, and saw by the glimmering lights of the tapers that they were both looking at a corpse stretched upon a bed. The body was that of the Caliph El Hadi.

One of the Arabian historians discreetly observes that Khaizran was explaining to Harun that the Prince had unfortunately choked while drinking a glass of water. The chronicler does not say whether this was the view of El Hadi's hireling. At any rate, the latter immediately perceived that his mission was at an end, and that Harun was no longer the heir but the successor of his late employer.

The reign of Harun-el-Rashid has been handed down to posterity as the crowning glory of the Abbasid Caliphate—the apogee of Moslem civilisation—the Augustan and Arthurian eras of Saracen dominion. Yet, as a matter of fact, a little study tends to exhibit the wealth, the power, and splendour of the

principate of the fifth Abbasid rather as an episode, arising from the accidental concurrence of riches and military success, than as a crisis in one of the important themes of history.

The jarring elements of which the Moslem power was formed met for a moment in a harmonious coincidence, and for that brief period men were dazzled by a wonderful and glittering political edifice, presenting all the appearance of a stable and powerful empire, but in reality possessing neither foundations, strength, nor symmetry. An exterior or superficial view of Harun-el-Rashid's government and Empire is apt to reproduce in the mind of the student of to-day the same illusion which it imposed on the world in the early part of the ninth century.

Indeed, it is hardly possible to examine the histories or chronicles of that period, without conceiving that the Caliphate was a power worthy to be ranked one of the great Empires of the world.

Harun-el-Rashid, a proud, ambitious, magnanimous prince, a capable warrior, a wise administrator, a patron of letters and arts, was a worthy pinnacle of the structure of a mighty state. His Imperial court was polished, luxurious and unlimitedly wealthy; the capital, Baghdad, a gigantic mercantile city surrounding a huge administrative fortress, wherein every department of state had a properly regulated and well ordered public office; where schools and colleges abounded; whither philosophers, students, doctors, poets, and theologians flocked from all parts of the civilised globe. The provinces were calm and well governed; taxes and revenues were gathered without difficulty; the provincial capitals were embellished with vast public buildings and linked together by an effective and rapid service of posts and caravans; the frontiers were secure and well garrisoned, the army loyal, efficient, and brave; the governors and ministers, honest and forbearing. The Empire stretched with equal strength and unimpaired control from the Cilician gates to Aden, and from Egypt to Central Asia. Christians, Pagans, and Jews, as well as Moslems, were employed in the government service. Usurpers, rebellious generals, and false prophets seemed to have vanished from the Moslem dominions. Traffic and wealth had taken the place of revolution and famine. The disorderly towns were carefully policed and regulated. Pestilence and disease

were met by Imperial hospitals and government physicians. Wars were always aggressive and external, never unlooked for or defensive. The Caliph himself visited the various cities of his dominions in peace, secure from the assassin's knife.

Assuredly, the Empire of Harun-el-Rashid must have appeared to have been a permanent institution; and yet, if the truth were told, it did not contain a single element of stability or cohesion. The forces of disorder, fanaticism and schism had spent themselves: the massacre of the Rawendis and the destruction of Mokanna had for the moment checked the tendency of the Eastern provinces to separation. The ruthless discipline of Mansur had broken down the arrogance of the Emirs and governors. The establishment of the capital at Baghdad had destroyed the political power of the mobs of Kufa, Basra, and Wasit. The cause of the house of Ali had, by continued disaster, lost hold over all sections of the population. Consequently, there was peace within the Empire—not the peace of loyalty, but the peace of acquiescence and weariness.

Without, on the frontiers, the Caliphs had no enemies worthy of the name. The Roman Empire in the West, though still unconquerable, was incapable of a vigorous counter-stroke; the loss of the provinces of North Africa was no danger to Egypt. The newly-founded kingdoms of the Idrisids and Aghlabids, which had been permitted to come into existence on the North African coast, were nominally vassals of the Caliph; separated as they were from his interference by seas and deserts, they had no motive or cause to strike eastward against one whom they neither feared nor hated, while all the plunder of the Christian seaboard of the Mediterranean lay at their feet. The deserts of Turkestan were in a state of quiescence; the restless hordes of Mongolia had for the moment neither the organisation nor population to give the initial impetus for another westward migration. The Khazars of the Caucasus were for the time being tranquil. Hence, though there was no recognised peace with the neighbouring states, the Commander of the Faithful had no serious danger to confront in any single quarter.

Tranquillity within, and absence of danger from without, permitted a general improvement of commercial and mercantile wealth of the Empire, which was accompanied by a con-

current revival of arts, science, and literature. Riches, security, and peace are the necessary surroundings of the student, the maker of beautiful things, and the writer of beautiful words; for, unless such conditions prevail, there is no market for philosophy, no material for the artist, and no audience for the poet. But still this imposing Empire, over which Harun-el-Rashid ruled, was hopelessly weak and feeble, since, with all the material accidents of greatness, it possessed not one single essential of endurance. Harun-el-Rashid was a noble prince, and incontestably legitimate by the right of the House of Abbas; yet the right of the House of Abbas was the right of chicanery and violence. Not one single Moslem could have looked on it as a thing to die for in hopes of a heavenly reward alone; men could not be expected to fight for Harun-el-Rashid as they had fought in the early days for Omar or Othman, or even for the first Caliph of the House of Omayya. Fanaticism had departed from the army, leaving desire of pay and lust for plunder in its room. Valiant Turkish mercenaries were taking the place of the fiery Arabs of the early days, artificial discipline replaced the brotherhood of the first Moslems, formal tactics the irresistible charges of would-be martyrs, and carefully considered strategy the aimless wanderings of hosts of enthusiasts. As they increased in temporal efficiency the military forces of the Caliphate rapidly began to decline in actual worth: since the troops of the Abbasid Commander of the Faithful, in fact, were armies of men and no longer the Hosts of the Lord. So long as pay was forthcoming and the enemy not too powerful, the soldiers of the Caliphate would do well enough; but in the hour of distress they must have lacked both the spiritual fire and the stern determination of their predecessors.

In government business the rough and ready methods of Arabian administration had given place to a complicated system of Divans, initiated partly from the Roman, but chiefly taken from the Persian, system of government. Posts in Finance, Privy Seal, Crown Lands, Justice and Military affairs were each administered by separate bureaux in the hands of ministers and officials; an army of clerks, scribes, writers, and accountants swarmed into these offices and gradually swept the whole power of the government into their own hands by separating the

Commander of the Faithful from any direct intercourse with his subjects.

The Imperial Palace and the entourage were equally based on Roman and Persian precedents. Eunuchs, closely veiled "harems" of women, guards, spies, go-betweens, pimps, jesters, poets, and dwarfs, clustered around the person of the Commander of the Faithful, each, in his degree, endeavouring to gain the royal favour and indirectly distracting the royal mind from affairs of business and state. Meanwhile the mercantile trade of the East poured gold into Baghdad, and supplemented the other enormous stream of money derived from the contributions of plunder and loot despatched to the capital by the commanders of the victorious raiding forces which harried Asia Minor, India, and Turkestan.

This seemingly unending supply of Turkish slaves and Byzantine specie added to the richness of the revenues of Irak, and, combined with the vast commercial traffic of which Baghdad was the centre, produced a large and powerful moneyed class, composed of the sons of generals, officials, landed proprietors, royal favourites, merchants, and the like, who encouraged the arts, literature, philosophy, and poetry, as the mood took them, building palaces for themselves, vying with each other in the luxury of their entertainments, suborning poets to sound their praises, dabbling in philosophy, supporting various schools of thought, endowing charities, and, in fact, behaving as the wealthy have always behaved in all ages. I have said that the Abbasid Empire in the days of Harun-el-Rashid was weak and feeble to a degree, and perhaps the reader will consider this a foolish proposition when he takes into consideration that I have described the Empire as orderly, the administration definite and settled, the army efficient, and wealth abundant. The reason I make the suggestion is that the Abbasid Empire had lost touch with everything original and vital in Islam, and was constructed entirely by the reunion of the fragments of the empires Islam had destroyed. There was nothing in the empire which appealed to the higher instincts of the leaders of the people; the holy war had degenerated into a systematic acquisition of plunder. The Caliph had become a luxurious Emperor or King of Kings; the administration had changed

from a patriarchal system to a bureaucracy. The wealthier classes were rapidly losing all faith in the religion of the state; speculative philosophy and high living were taking the place of Koranic orthodoxy and Arabian simplicity. The solitary bond which could have held the Empire together, the sternness and plainness of the Moslem faith, was completely neglected by both the Caliph and his advisers. Jews, pagans and Christians swarmed in the public offices. Atheism, materialism and agnosticism infected the whole of the official class; the religious schools were embroiled in metaphysical disputes. Many of the officials who were nominally Moslems were in effect unbelievers. Harun-el-Rashid himself was a wine-bibber, and his palace was decorated with graven images of birds and beasts and men. In fact Mohammed, his teaching and beliefs were entirely neglected and forgotten by those whose sole business it was to maintain and uphold them. That the state religion had grown formal and contemptible to the rulers of the Empire would not have mattered so much, perhaps, had it not been for the fact that the Moslem creed was the sole cause of the existence of the Empire itself: the state was the church, and the church the state. If the church was neglected or perished, the Empire ceased to have any reason for being, and must succumb to the first serious shock.

It was impossible to replace the Moslem creed by any other cohesive idea which would hoop in the Moslem world with a sense of unity. The Empire was strictly cosmopolitan, held only by the slender thread of the Koran; though Islam might still maintain a hold over the people: once the centre of government grew lax and doubtful with regard to the fundamental principles of the religion of the Prophet, the Empire as an Empire was doomed. For a moment we stand amazed at the greatness of the Abbasid dominion; then suddenly we realise that it is but as a fair husk enclosing the dust and ashes of dead civilisation.

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Harun-el-Rashid was the boy-ruler of a new fledged Empire with an apparently vigorous church, a valiant army, a well-filled treasury and an efficient bureaucracy at his disposal; all he needed was statesmen to tell him how to dispose of his

inheritance. With a perception far in advance of his years he selected the very persons whom worldly wisdom, sagacity and popular opinion would have most certainly approved ; yet subsequent events showed his choice to have been a most fatal though unavoidable blunder. Harun-el-Rashid chose the Barmecides as his ministers and advisers.

The Barmecides were the members of one of those powerful Persian families who, during the days of the first Arabian invasions, had abjured their religion, foresworn their loyalty to their king, boldly adopted the language and creed of their conquerors, and by their wealth and intelligence retained their position in the state.

The first Moslem of the Barmecide race was a Magian priest who surrendered to Qotaiba, when the latter invaded the province of Balkh. His son, Khaled-ibn-Barmek, had been one of Abu Muslim's supporters during the first years of the revolution which overthrew the House of Omayya ; his services in Khorasan ingratiated him in the favours of the first Abbasid Caliph. Thenceforward Ibn Barmek and his descendants took care to remain in close proximity to the person of the Commander of the Faithful, insensibly moulding the Imperial policy on matters of finance, foreign affairs, or internal administration.

Under Es Saffah and Mansur, Khaled was ever the obedient slave of his successive masters. Was a false witness needed, Khaled was prepared with elaborate perjury. Was the privy purse exhausted, the Barmecide would fill it with a personal loan. Was a revolution to be quelled, the ubiquitous Persian's diplomacy sowed dissensions among the disaffected. Was a new revenue required, the trusty minister had a new and unexpected method of extortion to hand. Did the ladies of the Imperial household cause pain to their august master, the son of the Magian was capable of smoothing over domestic difficulties. In fact in war, in peace, in right, in wrong, at home and abroad, the unobtrusive Persian contrived to make himself indispensable to the two first Caliphs of the House of Abbas.

The Barmecide's personal policy was the very antithesis to that of the Arabian Emirs. He had no ambition to seize a province or to set up an independent kingdom, no wish to assist some puppet pretender in hopes of becoming his viceroy in the

East; no family tradition biased his view of the Alid cause, no stormy religious passion or belief shook his political views. To remain in the sovereign's confidence, quietly to conduct the affairs of the Empire, to enjoy in silence the knowledge of the possession of power, was his only desire. When Mansur died Khaled-ibn-Barmek was old, and during the reign of Mahdi transmitted his office to his son Yahyah, who followed his father's footsteps and kept in close touch with the ruling Sovereign, advising, suggesting and assisting, but never committing the slightest action which could arouse his master's fear or suspicion. So apt and humble was Yahyah in his trade that he succeeded in establishing even closer relations between himself and the Caliph than had subsisted between his father and Mahdi's predecessor; not only did this second Barmecide persuade the haughty Princess Khaizran to adopt his son Fadl as milk brother to Harun-el-Rashid, but contrived to secure for himself the office of tutor and guardian to the young Prince.

When we take into consideration the death of Hadi at the hands of Khaizran, the fact that Harun was the ward of Yahyah, that Yahyah had intrigued during Mahdi's lifetime to eliminate Hadi from the succession, we bring together a certain amount of circumstantial evidence which would tend to implicate the Barmecides in the removal of the fourth Abbasid Caliph. At any rate when Harun-el-Rashid became Commander of the Faithful, Yahyah was the first person to congratulate his young ward on his elevation to power.

Harun could have had no other choice than to repose confidence in the Barmecide family. For three generations they had been the subservient slaves, the disinterested advisers, and the principal supporters of his house. During that time they had probed every channel of administration, gathered up every detail of foreign and domestic policy into their hands, had learned the whole financial gamut of the provinces, and acquainted themselves with the records, characters and capacities of the leading public men. Undoubtedly devoted to the throne, and experienced in every branch of public business, what more likely men than Yahyah and his sons could Harun-el-Rashid have found to assist him in controlling the State?

At the time of Harun's accession, the chief representatives

of the Barmecide family were Yahyah and his sons Fadl, Ja'afar, Musa and Mohammed. The young Caliph decided to accept them all as his ministers and servants. Yahyah, his tutor, he made his chief Wazir; to Fadl, his milk-brother, he gave the commissionership of the Eastern Empire, to Ja'afar the West; to Musa and Mohammed, posts in his privy council.

During their tenure of office the Barmecides exerted their combined abilities in developing and enriching the Empire of their master; from a material point of view nothing could have been more successful. In the eastern and western provinces order was restored, justice was formally administered, roads were repaired, caravanserais were built, trackless deserts were made passable for trade by means of wells and cisterns, the armies were more carefully disciplined, taxes were imposed with science and care, and a regular fleet was established on the Mediterranean. Combined with these schemes, developing the financial resources of the Empire, the Barmecides fostered a benevolent policy of tolerance towards the non-Moslems. Christians and Jews were encouraged to make use of their capacities as public servants, to build churches and synagogues, and to celebrate their feasts and religious services in public without fear or shame, while bishops and rabbis were received at court as honoured guests. Besides inspiring the Christians and Jews with a sense of gratitude and loyalty towards the state, the Barmecides conceived an even bolder project in endeavouring to bring about a truce between the followers of Ali and the Sunnis: certain potential leaders of the Alid party were persuaded to surrender, and an era of tolerance and schism was inaugurated.

For a few years the Barmecide policy prospered beyond all hope, the Empire grew and grew in wealth and splendour, and the fame of the Caliph and his ministers spread to the uttermost corners of the earth, even to the distant court of Charlemagne.

It was now that Harun-el-Rashid tasted of the fulness of power and prosperity, his armies ever victorious, his sons growing up to manhood in strength and beauty, his ministers loyal and wise, his wives and women devoted and beautiful, his own ambitions sublime and splendid, his health and intellect vigorous and unimpaired.

During this period the Barmecides themselves reaped something of the fruits which they had husbanded for their patron. Their audience halls were thronged with clients and suppliants; for their entertainment, philosophers and divines contended in subtle arguments and disputes; in their honour, the greatest poets polished and repolished the most delicious epigrams and flattering couplets; while the proudest Emirs humbled themselves before them in hopes of favour and promotion. In every office, department, and council, Barmecide influence and Barmecide policy were supreme. So for a time the Empire prospered. Then signs became evident that there was a division within the Empire which neither Barmecide nor Caliph could cope with or heal. The Persian water and the Arab oil would not mix; strive as they would the ministers could not bridge the gulf which separated the Semitic and Iranian people. Once more the Shias began to raise their rebellious heads, once more the Arabian preachers began their raucous incitements to massacre and orthodoxy. The Persians, proud of their learning, civilisation, culture and philosophy, scorned and contemned the Arabs, who, in turn, loathed and detested those converts, whom they deemed Pagan at heart, and whose promotion they looked upon with fanatical jealousy.

These dissensions, though concealed from general view, were patent to Harun-el-Rashid and the Barmecides. Neither the wealth nor the superficial prosperity of the Empire could hide from the Caliph and his advisers the danger, which neither justice nor good government could remove. As a final resource Harun-el-Rashid, we must suppose with Barmecide approval, decided to divide the Empire in two, making his son Amin governor of Irak, Syria and Arabia, and Mamun governor of Persia and the Eastern provinces. By adopting this expedient, Harun-el-Rashid evidently hoped to form a dual Empire, each half of which, while being independent of the other, would still maintain loyalty to the throne.

Had it been possible for the members of the House of Abbas to remain at once united in their own interests, and neutral with regard to Iranian-Semitic dispute, the stratagem might have availed. Unhappily, however, this racial discord penetrated even to the Imperial harem. Amin, who had been selected

as governor of the Western districts, was the son of Zubaydeh, the Caliph's Arabian wife, who bitterly detested Persian customs; while Mamun, born of a Persian woman, had grown up under the tutorship of an intriguing Persian noble. Instead of solving the problem, the division of the Empire only accentuated the difficulty by providing the two hostile factions with sympathetic leaders. In vain did the Barmecides and the Caliph draw up rigid ordinances of succession, providing that Mamun should succeed Amin, and that with regard to the Caliphate there should be neither rivalry nor enmity between the brothers. The facts of the case were too strong to be curbed by documents or oaths, and it was soon patent to all that the death of Harun-el-Rashid would be the signal for open war. Hitherto the Caliph and his advisers had jointly endeavoured to maintain an equal balance between the Persians and the Arabs; but now that the contending parties were sharply divided into opposing camps with leaders and representatives within the very precincts of the Imperial court and household, the task became almost impossible.

Against their will, perhaps, the Barmecides were slowly and inevitably drawn into the ranks of the Persians, while Harun-el-Rashid himself was gradually enmeshed in the net of Arabian intrigue. Strive as they might, the ruler and his advisers were irresistibly dragged asunder; and in this divorce between the Prince and the ministerial family the Empire came to inevitable ruin.

Gallantly and stubbornly did Harun and the Barmecides endeavour to stand together; but the circumstances in which they found themselves, and the subtle influences which were brought to bear on them, were too strong. One by one the ties which bound them were snapped, until at last Harun-el-Rashid and the Barmecides were finally estranged.

Because the Barmecides were of Persian origin they were made the natural refuge of Persians and Shias, who were oppressed by orthodox and Arabian enemies; because the Barmecides were tolerant and unfanatical, the speculative philosophers, the sceptics, the free thinkers and the non-Moslem notables crowded into their halls of audience, seeking protection from the legist, the purist, and the fanatic. Because the

Barmecides had little taste for the niceties of ceremonial observances, to them fled the poets, the singers, the artists and the *littérateurs* of the day; because the Barmecides had for nearly a score of years held power, their freedmen, their clients and friends held a monopoly of government appointments. Their agents were in every city, their supporters in every department and office, their favourites the first to receive promotion. Consequently, whether they willed it or no, the Barmecides became a powerful and definite party in the state. As against this we have Harun-el-Rashid. In the privacy of the harem his favourite wife, Zubaydeh, the mother of Amin, was ever magnifying the faults of the Barmecides, and slowly and gradually alienating from them his private friendship. In his public walks he was approached by bearers of letters describing the increasing power of his ministers and his own decreasing influence. In his mosque, learned doctors expatiated on the decay of morals, on the decline of religion, and on the increase of scepticism, always insinuating that the Barmecides were alone responsible. In his hall of audience spies and intriguers whispered in his ear suggestions that the Barmecides were favourable to the Alid cause, that they were planning a revolution of which he was to be the first victim. In fact, on every available occasion the Arabian enemies of the Barmecides found an opportunity of striking a blow at the family whose ruin they sought.

The fanatic, the place-hunter, the disappointed, and the ambitious, each in turn contrived to play upon the fear, the prejudice, the superstition, or the pride of the Caliph. Now Zubaydeh would unfold some dark and scandalous intrigue which was intended to link the names of a Barmecide and an inmate of the Imperial harem; now a fanatical hermit of the desert would openly inveigh against the increase of irreligion; now a vulgar spy would announce that some Persian Alid had been secretly spared from execution. Never a day passed without its suggestions, inferences, and insinuations. Long did Harun-el-Rashid battle against this continual stream of invective and slander, but eventually, as might be expected, he yielded to its constant pressure. Against his better judgment he suffered his mind to be turned against his faithful ministers. Suspicions and jealousies grew up in his thoughts like rank weeds, choking his sense of

gratitude, of justice, and moral obligation. The Barmecides no longer appeared to Harun-el-Rashid as they once had, the trusted councillors, the neutral and just diplomatists, the friends of his leisure hours, brothers in all but blood ; they seemed instead to have become a dark and secret knot of conspirators, engaged in engrossing to themselves alone all wealth, and all power, perhaps to be nourishing designs against his Empire and his person. Harun-el-Rashid and the Barmecides had lost each other in the labyrinth of Arabian and Persian intrigue, nor were they destined ever to meet again.

So slowly and so gradually had the canker of disunion introduced itself between the Commander of the Faithful and his ministers, that neither suspected the other of harbouring hostile intentions, both refrained from precipitating an open breach ; Harun-el-Rashid still jested and talked with Ja'afar ; Yahyah still gave orders as the chief minister ; Musa, Mohammed and Fadl still retained their posts. In the open courts of the palaces and offices, the Prince and his ministers still maintained a hollow friendship ; but in the harems, women passed to and fro whispering of plots and counter plots ; in the theological schools, dark frowning lawyers and holy men muttered curses, and spoke of bloody deeds to be done ; in the recessed bazaars, merchants, citizens and soldiers discussed strange rumours and idle tales that passed from lip to lip ; in the open street, rhymesters and poets chanted sarcastic verses in veiled terms concealing a double sense. The estrangement between the Caliph and the Barmecides was known to all but to themselves. So the intolerable farce continued for a time : Harun-el-Rashid shuddering on his throne, yet imagining that to the world he appeared the greatest and happiest of monarchs ; the Barmecides, ordering, commanding and ruling, yet in fact on the verge of ruin.

So matters continued for a full year. At the end of that time Harun-el-Rashid carried the Barmecides with him on the pilgrimage to Mecca. During the outward and return voyage the Caliph had appeared depressed and melancholy ; over the whole party brooded a sense of apprehension and foreboding as of some terrible calamity yet to come.

When the homeward journey was nearly ended, and the Royal

camp was pitched at Anbar, a short distance from Baghdad, Harun-el-Rashid suddenly cast despondency aside, called Yahyah and his sons Ja'afar and the rest to him, robed them in dresses of honour, and discoursed with them of the future and on affairs of state. All the Barmecides, save Ja'afar, were heartened by the words of the Commander of the Faithful, each returning to his tent consoled and happy. Ja'afar alone remained the prey of anxiety and fear. Harun-el-Rashid, noting this, bade him be of good cheer and begged him to prepare a banquet for himself, saying that he would have invited him to a feast that night, had it not been that he desired to be alone. Ja'afar at last withdrew to his own tents and sat down to listen to his singers, to drink wine, and to pass the night in merriment; but his spirits were oppressed with misery, and he found no pleasure either in cup or song. Once at a sound he started to his feet in fear, but it was only to meet a slave sent by the Caliph with a gift of scent and dried fruit. The hours passed, and a second messenger came on a similar errand; near upon midnight, a third. A little later there appeared Mesrur the Eunuch. "Arise, O Ja'afar," he cried, "the Commander of the Faithful calls thee." Ja'afar, filled with dismal apprehension, said that he would follow, but that he must first give his servants certain orders. "Give orders here and now," said the Eunuch, "for thou must accompany me at once." With these words Mesrur motioned Ja'afar to follow him. When they reached the Imperial tent Mesrur drew his scimitar and bade Ja'afar bare his neck. In despair the luckless Barmecide implored Mesrur to spare his life, reminding the slave of their ancient friendship, and begging him to remember that their master might repent. At last the Eunuch consented to approach Harun-el-Rashid. Mesrur found the Caliph sitting on his prayer-rug, alone. "Where is the head of Ja'afar?" cried El Rashid. "O Commander of the Faithful," cried Mesrur, "I bring Ja'afar himself"; and drawing aside the curtain of the door showed the Caliph his adopted brother crouched upon the threshold. "I called not for Ja'afar, but for his head," replied Harun. Mesrur, seeing that it was hopeless, struck off Ja'afar's head with a single blow. Yahyah and Fadl were loaded with chains, Musa and Mohammed were slain by order of the Caliph, their clients and freedmen were

imprisoned, their slaves were distributed, their goods confiscated, their nearest and dearest all perished miserably, some falling under the knife of the executioner, some expiring in dungeons, others dying in misery and want. Thus departed the glories and hopes of the Barmecides, and with them those of the House of Abbas. Harun-el-Rashid was now alone. In a sort of hysterical vertigo he had struck down his nearest and dearest friends, robbed himself of his most scrupulous advisers, and stript his council of its brightest intellects. Bitterness, regret, remorse and repentance reigned supreme in his mind. The ribald jester, Abu Nowas, could no longer bring a smile to his lips. Harun-el-Rashid became gloomy, despondent and severe.

When Harun-el-Rashid had slain Ja'afar and made away with the sons of Barmek, he found himself alone and solitary in the dominions that his ministers had ruled in his name. He knew that around him the Arabian and Persian partisans were intriguing and plotting the destruction of his Empire; that his sons Mamun and Amin were only waiting for his death as a signal to plunge the provinces into a disastrous internecine war; and that his own life was the measure of the security of his house. Vainly did he rack his brains for some expedient or some policy whereby he could avert the strife which he knew was impending. There were now no Barmecides to advise, assist, and further his designs; no wise counsellors with spies and poets at their command, through whose agency private intentions might be ascertained and public opinion formed; no honest heads of departments to control expenditure and curb official tyranny and corruption.

Harun-el-Rashid's new Wazir, Ibn-al-Rabi, was a broken reed, a corrupt, feather-headed Arab, who desired nothing so much as the downfall of all Persians, and nothing so little as the public welfare. Mamun's tutor, Ibn Sahl, known to be a violent Shia at heart, waited only for the day when he should become Wazir to declare his enmity of the Sunnis.

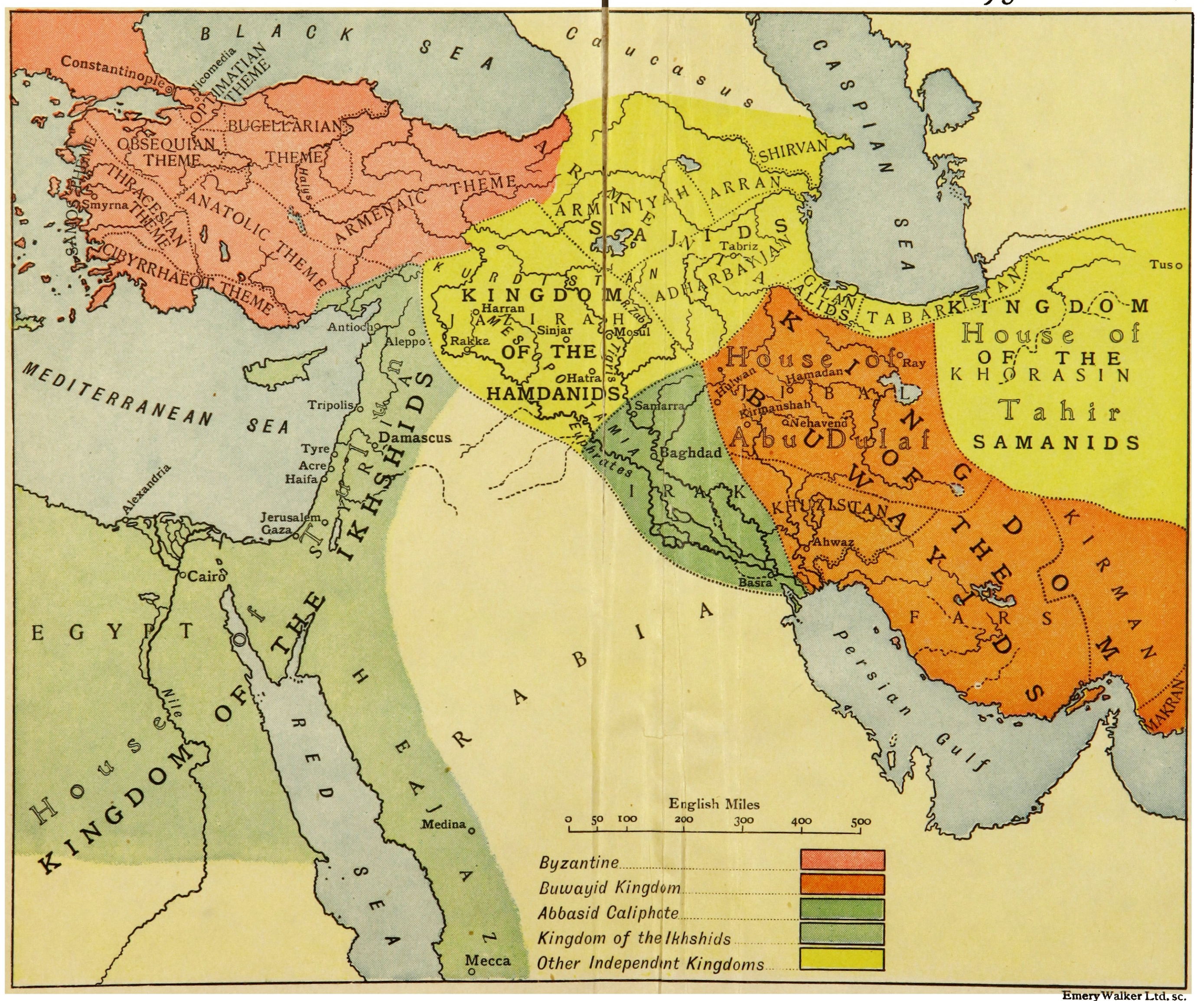
Amid these dismal surroundings the most exasperating circumstance to the Caliph must have been the knowledge that so long as he lived he was all powerful and secure. It was the future that he could not provide against. His ministers, though detesting one another, were loyal enough to him; his sons, though

ready to spring at each other's throats, revered the Caliph as a beloved father; the Syrians, Arabs and Persians, though divided among themselves, were devoted to the Commander of the Faithful. Popular among his people, acknowledged as the greatest of rulers, belauded by poets, divines, and philosophers —during the declining years of his life Harun-el-Rashid was the most wretched of men. What matter if he were courted by Charlemagne? If he received tribute from the Empress of the Greeks? If he were the father of valiant and devoted sons? Of what account were these trifles if his Empire was doomed to dissolve in shame and ignominy, his house to be a mock and common show, and all his deep laid schemes predestined to failure and disappointment?

Harun was no selfish voluptuary nor brutal despot. In him the statesman predominated; and to the statesman posterity and posterity alone is of account. Harun-el-Rashid endeavoured to divert his own thoughts and those of his subjects from the melancholy fate which was awaiting his dominion by a war with Constantinople. War has sometimes a consolidating effect on disunited peoples, and to war the Commander of the Faithful appealed. Taking as a pretext the refusal of Nicephorus to pay the accustomed tribute, the Caliph hurled the whole strength of his Empire against the passes of the Taurus. Nicephorus yielded, and the Moslem armies withdrew. The wily Greek imagined that Harun-el-Rashid had been exhausted by the effort, that the booty his forces carried away had glutted the appetite of the Saracens for plunder. Once the snows had fallen on the Amanus, the Emperor once more broke the terms of the treaty.

Harun-el-Rashid accepted the challenge with avidity. Persian and Arabian quarrels he could not compound, but he still found satisfaction in castigating the faithless Greeks. Through the bitter cold of the Anatolian winter the Commander of the Faithful led his armies; with superhuman efforts he made good an entry on to the table-land of the peninsula, forcing his way into the very heart of the enemy's country, burning, plundering and destroying, venting his spleen on something tangible and real. Again the Greek Emperor yielded; again Harun-el-Rashid withdrew, a weary and desponding conqueror.

## DYNASTIES IN THE TIME OF THE BUWAYIDS c. 932 A.D. (VIII)



The moment the strain of holy war was removed, the affairs of the Abbasid state began to go astray; the fanatical Arabs insisted on the abandonment of the policy of toleration towards Christians and Jews; all who were not Moslems were forced to wear a distinctive dress; the governors of the outlying provinces grew insolent and undisciplined; the security of the great highways was impaired; the revenues began to decline; the armies to lose their discipline and cohesion. Harun-el-Rashid was still all powerful, but only by exerting his own personality could he enforce his will; and when at last, owing to the tyranny of his lieutenants, revolution broke out in Khorasan, he was forced to set out to suppress it in person. By the terror of his name, and the vigour of his intellect, he quelled the rebellion and scattered his enemies; but the fatigues of the campaign and the anxieties of which he had been the victim during these later years had impaired his constitution, and presently he fell ill. The most able physicians were hurried to the Royal camp at Tus, only to pronounce the condition of the Caliph hopeless. On his death bed he once more charged his sons to observe the covenant he had made with them, bidding Mamun retain his position of viceroy of the East during the life of Amin, and at the same time charging Amin to remember that Mamun and his sons were to succeed him. The pathos of his last commands lies in the fact that no man knew better than Harun how useless these directions were. Then, having chosen his shroud and commanded that the grave in which he was to be buried should be dug in his presence, he awaited death, overwhelmed with gloom and melancholy. His last act was to approve the execution of the rebel whom he had conquered. Shallow critics have condemned the greatest of the Abbasids for not showing mercy and leniency during his last hours. They should remember that he died fighting a hopeless battle in the cause of law and order, and that his last act was to condemn one of the disturbers of the peace.

Barely forty-seven years of age, Harun died disillusioned and wretched while still in the fulness of his power, yet powerless to achieve anything permanent or lasting.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE DECLINE OF THE ABBASIDS

WHEN Harun followed Ja'afar to the grave a tremor of apprehension passed through the Empire of the Caliphs. Persian and Arab glared in mutual distrust and hate. The tyrant before whom they had trembled no longer stood between them; the barrier which had hitherto held the two parties at arm's length had dissolved, and peace was at an end. Harun lay dead in the town of Tus; Amin, the Arab, was acting as governor in Baghdad, Mamun, the Persian, leading his father's armies in Khorasan. The two brothers looked across the world toward their father's tomb. Instinct bade them abandon the quarrel that was not yet openly declared, and fly into each other's arms; but neither the Vizier Ibn-al-Rabi, nor the minister Ibn Sahl, would have it so. For party ends two men must hold the brothers asunder, though by so doing they rent the Empire in twain.

Amin, a lethargic and sensual youth of twenty-four; Mamun, an amiable boy of eighteen, were both easy victims in the hands of the designing counsellors. By ministering to his master's love of pleasure, Ibn-al-Rabi contrived to engross the whole conduct of affairs into his hands; by playing upon the suspicions and fears of Mamun, Ibn Sahl could dictate to him both his policy and conduct. Thus the sons of Harun-el-Rashid became the puppets of those two faction leaders whom the late Caliph had so long held at bay.

The civil war was not long delayed: while under the sinister influence of Ibn-al-Rabi, Mamun was persuaded to acquiesce in the robbing of his brother, by reducing his inheritance and diverting his armies; similarly, Ibn Sahl contrived to inspire

apprehension and fear of future depredations in the breast of Amin.

Each minister followed his opponent's move with a rapid but formal counterstroke, as do players at a game of chess. Amin's confiscations were followed by Mamun's protest; Ibn-al-Rabi's reply lay in Amin's destruction of Harun's testament of succession. Ibn Sahl then persuaded Mamun to omit his brother's name from the Friday prayer. Ibn-al-Rabi took up the challenge and in the name of Amin despatched a punitive expedition to wage war on the young Viceroy of Khorasan.

It was now that there entered upon the scene a new power, a prototype of that kind of man who was to rule in the future. Ibn-al-Rabi and Ibn Sahl had gained their ends, but neither was experienced in war, neither was capable of conducting the campaign against his rival; the army of Baghdad was placed under the command of an Arabian Emir, that of Khorasan under Tahir-ibn-Hussain, a Persian slave. Truly, the death of Harun-el-Rashid marked the period of Abbasid greatness; here, within a year of his death, we have two puppet Caliphs manipulated by intriguing courtiers and fighting through the agency of mercenary troops led by soldiers of fortune.

Ali, the Arab, and his soldiers were no match for Tahir, the Persian, and his Turkish mercenaries from the North; the troops of Amin were defeated and his general slain at Ray. When the news reached Baghdad panic reigned in the city, a military revolt broke out in the capital which could only be appeased by a grant of four months' pay in advance. Ibn-al-Rabi trembled at this turn of the war he had provoked, for he realised that the snarling, hair-splitting, greedy, monkey soldiers of Irak were not such men as the warriors who had conquered at Nehaaend or spread destruction on the banks of the Oxus under Qotaiba. The Sunni Arabs of Irak were a degenerate race, softened and corrupted by pleasure and wealth.

Ibn-al-Rabi himself had neither genius nor deep cunning. His Prince lolled upon his cushions and asked his Wazir what he should do. Ibn-al-Rabi quaked with fear at his own barrenness of intellect, and Baghdad quaked with him. More soldiers were bribed to go out to meet and stay Tahir's advance, but neither Amin nor his minister dared venture with them. This second

army Tahir smote and shattered at Hamadan. A third he dispersed without striking a blow; it was sufficient for one of Tahir's agents to spread the rumour in the Arabian camp that Amin was dispensing more largesse in Baghdad to send the greedy cravens hurrying back to the capital with outstretched palms. Gradually Tahir advanced along the great road leading from Khorasan to Baghdad; Ray, Hamadan, Kirmanshah, and lastly Holwan opened their gates in turn, each city and district through which he passed acknowledging the supremacy and Caliphate of Mamun.

Ibn-al-Rabi realised that which the Barmecides had always known, that the day of Arab supremacy had passed with the Omayyads, and that it could never be restored. In despair he prompted Amin to rally the forces on which he had counted; he appealed to the tribes of the desert and to the Arabs of Syria. For a brief period it seemed as though they would answer to his call. The Syrian forces assembled at Ragga, where a large body of troops from Mesopotamia were awaiting their arrival before proceeding to Baghdad. Hardly had the two armies met than dissensions broke out amongst them: the troops of Irak reminded the Syrians of the battle of the Zab; the Syrians turned on the Southerners with taunts and threats. Words led to blows, and blows to a battle, in which the last Arabian army of Amin destroyed itself more effectively than could perhaps the troops of the conquering Tahir. The din subsided; the Syrians retired sullenly to their homes; the men of Irak, savage, disheartened and disloyal, proceeded with their general Husain to Baghdad, where Amin was endeavouring to drown his cares with wine and song.

When the sorry tale of the events of Ragga was unfolded to the wretched Prince, he sent for Husain the commander; but the Emir dreaded the interview and instead of proceeding alone to the palace assembled the army, and having informed them that Amin was a drunken idler, bade them in the name of God depose him and declare for Mamun. With one voice the treacherous troops acclaimed their still more perfidious leader. Amin was loaded with chains and imprisoned in the palace of his mother Zubaydeh. For a brief hour Husain was Mamun's general in Baghdad; but the worthless mercenaries who set him up cared

neither for Husain, Mamun or Amin—they had not rebelled for a cause, but for gold. "Give us money!" they cried. Husain bade them wait the arrival of Tahir. Ere nightfall Amin was reinstated and Husain lay in chains before him imploring his pardon. To such creatures as these was the defence of the Empire entrusted. These brawling thieves were the successors of the martyrs of the Bridge and the heroes of the Yarmuk.

While Amin was being deposed and reinstated, Tahir continued his onward march towards Baghdad. A little distance from the city he was joined by another of Mamun's Emirs named Harthama; a few days later the capital of the Empire was closely blockaded.

During the interval between the death of Mansur and the accession of Amin, Baghdad had increased enormously in size. The round city was now encircled by a vast suburb some eighteen miles in circumference, which extended far beyond the banks of the Tigris; this in turn was surrounded by a broad zone of scattered gardens, villas, and pleasure houses; the various quarters were intersected by irregular intervals—indeed, the walled quarter where the palaces and public offices were situated was now only a small portion of this huge capital of the Abbasids. The population was as various and peculiar as the distribution of the city. In the central portion were mercenary soldiers, officials, and government employees; in the richer quarters, the merchants and landowners dwelt with their hordes of servants and retainers; but beyond these there was, as there must be in all wealthy commercial centres, a huge floating population of the riff-raff and sweepings of the Empire, tempted thither by the Imperial largesse and doles of bread, by religious charities, by the open-handedness of the wealthy moslems, or drawn to Baghdad in search of employment as porters, boatmen and labourers.

When Harthama and Tahir commenced the siege their threats and promises gained over many of the regular defenders and the majority of the wealthy inhabitants, leaving only the poorer population and a few troops entirely devoted to the cause of Amin.

It seemed as if the city must fall immediately, until it became apparent that the masses of the people, who dwelt in the suburbs

and who had hitherto subsisted on the charity of the rich, were greatly enamoured of the anarchy attendant upon a siege. The police had fled, the gaol birds had been released from prison, the deserted homes of the chief people were at their mercy; to hold the enemy at bay by their huge numbers by day, and loot the deserted quarters by night, was entirely to the liking of this strange and unexpected army of derelicts.

Perhaps with the exception of the Paris Commune, there has rarely been recorded so strange a contest as that which took place at the siege of Baghdad.

In the centre of the city, Amin surrounded by singing girls and buffoons; on the walls of Mansur, his last loyal troops awaiting the final and fatal attack. In the suburbs a vast horde of abandoned wretches, looting, burning and destroying. Beyond these the lines of Tahir and Harthama; beyond them again, camps and settlements of the wealthy who had fled. Vainly did Harthama and Tahir endeavour to force their way toward the inner defences. Their mail-clad warriors were checked by rough barricades and ruined houses, or immersed in deflected canals. From behind walls and through the overhanging windows of the narrow streets, the advancing soldiers were smothered under showers of stones, bricks, and broken beams; when they retreated, countless numbers of lusty vagrants pursued them towards the open country. So for a space was the life of Amin defended by the vilest elements among his people, many of whom perhaps did not know his name.

This desultory street fighting between the rabble and the forces of Mamun lasted for many days; nor were his generals, Tahir and Harthama, able to defeat their contemptible foes, except by levelling the houses and literally cutting their approaches toward the centre of the town.

Eventually, after many weary months, the strange struggle came to an end. The suburbs were levelled, the ruined quarters cleared away, and at last the round city of Mansur itself was attacked in form. The catapults and ballistae of the Persians played upon the walls, the water supplies were cut off, the last inner ring became untenable. Amin, the Arab, sat disconsolate in his palace. He asked a favourite slave to sing to him, but the verses were melancholy and sad. "Woe is thee for a song

of woe," cried Amin. The girl withdrew, and as she left the room accidentally broke with her foot a priceless goblet of crystal. Amin was filled with terror, the omen was of evil portent. The besiegers pressed still closer, and at last Amin realised that the end had indeed come—from the darkness there came a mean ambassador to the lines of Harthama. Should Amin surrender privately to Harthama and not to Tahir; would Harthama spare his life?

Harthama agreed he would meet Amin on the Tigris bank at midnight; but Tahir learned of the bargain. Amin, disguised as a slave, crept to the water side; at the appointed hour Harthama despatched a bark to ferry him across the river. On the return journey the boat was over-set either by accident or of a purpose. Amin was plunged in the waves. A lusty swimmer, he gained the western shore. There Tahir's men were waiting for him. They seized upon the luckless Amin, and carried him to Tahir's camp. After a brief moment's respite the messengers of death approached the deposed Prince and struck off his head. Tahir laughed aloud. "To me is the glory of the campaign. Had this fool begged mercy of me, I had spared him. I slew him because he parleyed with Harthama my rival." So amid the smouldering ruins of the Baghdad of Mansur did the son of a Persian slave jest over the carcase of the favourite son of Harun-el-Rashid.

The next day Tahir announced himself governor of Baghdad and proclaimed Mamun Caliph. When Mamun in far off Merv heard of the victory and the price, he shed bitter tears for Amin's fate; nor indeed from that day could he look upon Tahir without weeping and praying for his brother.

# CHAPTER XXII

## ANARCHY

HAVING thus given in some detail the genesis of Islam and the rise of the first two great Moslem dynasties, it is now necessary to abandon particulars and incident in order to take a general view of the various historical developments which separate the last of the independent Abbasid Caliphs from the Ottoman Empire as it exists at present.

With the reign of Mamun we are confronted by two factors of the highest importance: (1) the establishment of regular mercenary troops in place of the annual levies of warriors who had hitherto supplied the various expeditions of conquest, and (2) the adoption of the policy of establishing hereditary local rulers in place of regularly appointed officials. The Caliphate, influenced profoundly by its Roman and Persian predecessors, had balanced between Imperialism and Suzerainty—whether the Caliph should be Emperor or King of Kings had long remained in doubt. The Omayyads and the first Abbasids had adopted the theory of Augustus; but with the gradual reassertion of Persian influence, centralisation and bureaucracy succumbed to the more natural but fatal system of vassal dynasties and hereditary governors—Spain and North-West Africa had gone beyond recall; Tunis had been given to the Aghlabid family by Harun-el-Rashid, nominally as an hereditary governorship, but really as independent principality.

The first fatal concession paved the way for the rapid dissolution of the Empire. In less than 50 years from the death of Harun-el-Rashid, the family of the Persian soldier Tahir who

had captured Baghdad was established as a reigning dynasty in Khorasan; the descendants of a Turkish slave of Mamun were the hereditary governors of Egypt, known to history as the sons of Tulun; while the sons of Abu Dulaf, an Emir elevated during Amin's brief reign, were confirmed by Mamun as governors of Hamadan.

Thus of the region which under the Omayyads had been an united Empire, one-half had been lost for ever, and of the remainder above one-third was broken up into semi-independent states. The establishment of a paid permanent army for the protection of the Caliph's person and declining power against the attacks of his vassals was the natural corollary of the adoption of the policy of decentralisation.

The private bodyguard of Mamun was composed of 4,000 Turks—that of Motassim, his successor, had swollen into an army of 70,000 men. This force quartered in Baghdad was composed mainly of Turks but supplemented by savages, barbarians, and blackguards drawn from the ends of the earth. Ferocity, cruelty, and brutality were accepted as proofs of courage by those responsible for the recruitment of the force. High pay and lax discipline were used as allurements to make good its numbers. The effect of the presence of such an army in the midst of a wealthy and effeminate community of Arabs and Persians ruled by a luxurious aristocracy can well be imagined: the Caliph and his advisers became the playthings, and the population the slaves, of their defenders. The ferocious troops and their officers were bound together by a bond of common interest—to plunder and terrorise the people, and to coerce their master. Baghdad became the scene of constant disorders, riots, mutinies, and faction fights.

The soldiers robbed the townsmen, and the townsmen retaliated by assassinating any solitary soldiers they could lay their hands on; while the wretched degenerates who now represented the House of Abbas were unable to intervene either as governors or peacemakers.

Motassim in despair decided to establish a standing camp at Samara [1] and so prevent the continual strife between those who

[1] This camp of Turkish mercenaries must have borne a close resemblance to the Parthian camp established near Ctesiphon.

provided his treasuries with wealth and those who defended him from external aggression.

The departure of the Caliph from Baghdad was only one step towards even further misfortunes. The government of Baghdad now fell into the hands of the family of Tahir, while the Caliph himself became the prisoner of his own army.

During the reigns of the succeeding Caliphs the degeneration of the Abbasid dominion proceeded apace—the dynastic governors increased in number and began encroaching on each other's dominions, while the Caliphs were murdered or put away at the caprice of the most influential chieftains or officers of the army of Samara.

In 865, Mustain, the fifth in succession from Mamun, fled from Samara and took refuge in Baghdad from the savages whose tyranny he could no longer bear. The Tahirid governor of Baghdad and the people endeavoured to defend the Commander of the Faithful against the Turkish troops. Baghdad now underwent a second siege, and the Caliphate a fresh humiliation—after a year's resolute defence the mercenaries captured the town, killed Mustain and set up Mutazz, his brother, in his place, and returned to Samara. Mustain's attempt to regain his independence marks the last flicker of Abbasid greatness.

From this time forward the actual rule of the Caliphs practically comes to an end. On the elevation of Mutazz the Turkish troops were absolute masters of the situation in Mesopotamia, while the rest of the provinces dissolved into a collection of warring kingdoms. The house of Tulun annexed Syria to the government of Egypt; the provinces of the family of Tahir were divided without reference to Baghdad between two new dynastic families of the Saffarids and Samanids, both of Persian origin; while in Armenia and Kurdistan two short-lived independent dynasties of the Sajids and Alids appeared.

A few years more and the House of Tulun was overthrown—but so feeble had the authority of the Caliph (or even his Turkish guards) grown that the disappearance of one dynasty was only the preface to the birth of another, that of the Ikhshids, who occupied the whole of the territory the Tulunids had owned. Presently North Mesopotamia, including Mosul and

Sinjar, fell into the hands of the Hamdanids, an Arab family, who had gradually increased in local authority and power—so that by 929 the nominal dominions of the Abbasids had shrunk, from Turkestan on the north-east and Egypt in the south-west, to the area now occupied by the provinces of Baghdad and Basra.

For another 40 years the Abbasids continued to appear to hold a shadowy authority over this last remnant of their Empire, which was in fact wielded by the Turkish officers of their mercenary army. The stupid brutality and declining valour of these troops brought about the final extinction of even an outward semblance of Abbasid control. A new dynasty, that of the Buwayhids, had in alliance with the Samanids engrossed the whole of Persia under their rule; to the Buwayhids the Caliph Mustakfi and the people of Baghdad applied for release from the Pretorian tyranny of the Turkish guards.

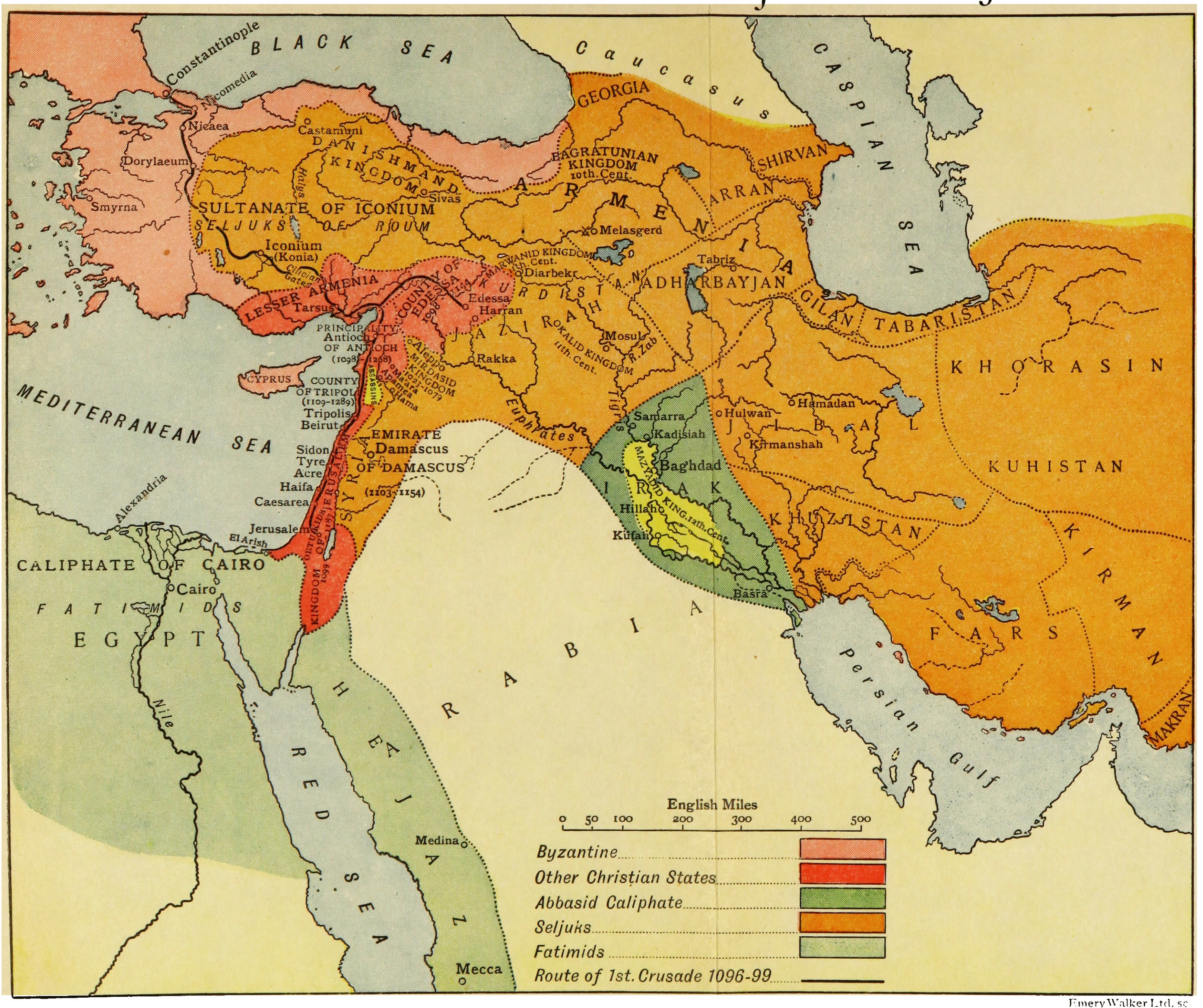
The chief of the Buwayhid house Ahmed, afterwards Muizz-al-Roada, took possession of Baghdad, crushed the dominion of the Turks and substituted his own in its stead. Mustakfi, who had hoped to recover something of the authority his predecessors had lost, made a feeble effort to oust his Buwayhid deliverer. As a result, blindness and a prison was the portion which he shared with two of his surviving predecessors. Ahmed the Buwayhid, now Emir of the Emirs and defender of governments, chose Moti, the cousin of Mustakfi, as Caliph. Henceforward, a private secretary and a modest pension represented the limits of the temporal power of the Commander of the Faithful.

The dynasties were now not only established in the whole of the provinces, but in the very capital itself. There can be little doubt that the world of Islam, which had been contained in the dominions of Harun-el-Rashid, scarcely realised the nature of the change which had gradually taken place between his death and the advent of the Buwayhids.

The war with the Greeks still continued with varying fortunes; the dynasties had grown up out of official appointment; the outward forms of religion and law remained unchanged; the annual pilgrimages to the holy places were but rarely interrupted; the wars between the various dynasties were

to outward appearance but the sequences of rebellion ; and in spite of disintegration and strife, the incredible and inexhaustible wealth of Mesopotamia still held good. Art, commerce, philosophy, and civilisation progressed rather than declined during these years of dissolution and decay, during which Abbasid power faded from the earth.

# BYZANTINE AND CRUSADERS v. SELJUKS circa 1130 A.D. (IX)




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## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE COMING OF THE SELJUKS

THE advent of the Buwayhids seemed for a moment to presage a revival; the energetic and capable Muiz-al-Dawla appeared likely to re-establish Baghdad as a capital in fact as well as in theory; but such hopes were but ill-founded—Islam was too hopelessly torn by schism, racial and family feuds, to be re-united. Shias, Atheists, Sophists, and Sunnis wrangled in the mosques and schools. Wild sects, ephemeral false prophets, strange anarchist organisations born of Pagan, Zoroastrian, and Manichaean traditions sprang into existence, while the dynasties fought ever more fiercely among themselves.

The degradation of the Caliph into a kind of paid official shattered the very idea of sanctioned authority. After the death of Muiz-al-Dawla, the Buwayhids concentrated their power in Persia and rarely extended their influence far north or east of Baghdad, leaving Syria, Egypt, and northern Mesopotamia to look after themselves.

Meanwhile in North Africa a new force began to make itself felt. Early in the ninth century the savage Berbers and bastard Arabs of the lands west of Egypt, long adherents of the Alid cause, flocked to the standard of a prophet named Obaydullah, who had assumed the title of Mahdi, announcing himself the true descendant of Ali and Fatima and therefore lawful Commander of the Faithful.

The insignificant position which the Abbasid Caliph held, and the long years of separation from Baghdad, had made Obaydullah's task an easy one. In 909 he established a dynasty and Caliphate in North Africa.

Soon after the Buwayhids entered Baghdad, Aziz, the fourth in succession from Obaydullah, destroyed the Ikhshid dynasty in Egypt and established there what was known as the Fatimite Caliphate. The extraordinary flimsiness of these Mohammedan governments is shown by the fact that, hardly were the Fatimites fairly established in Egypt, than they lost their North African possessions.

About 985 the Fatimites held Egypt and Southern Syria, the Buwayhids, Irak, various branches of the Hamdanids—all that lay between Aleppo and the Tigris. Had either the Fatimites or Buwayhids possessed any real capacity for empire, it would not have been long before their frontiers were coterminous—the divided Hamdanid family was declining and effete; those of Mosul succumbed to Buwayhid pressure in 985, but only disappeared to be replaced by the Arab dynasty of the Okaylids at Mosul and the Kurdish Marwanids at Diarbekir, while the Hamdanids of Aleppo allowed themselves to be absorbed by the Caliphs of Egypt some thirteen years later.

The weakness of both Buwayhids and Fatimites proved an irresistible temptation to the Bedawin of the Syrian desert, almost simultaneously two clans respectively invaded North Syria and southern Mesopotamia—Abu Ali Salik-ibn-Mirdas and the men of the Beni Kilab founded an intermittent kingdom in Aleppo which endured with intervals of Fatimid reconquest from 1023 until 1079. The Beni Mayyad, a sub-tribe of the Beni Asad clan, annexed the whole of the land between the Euphrates and Tigris south of Kadisiah, founded the city of Hilla, and remained independent until 1096. It is not surprising that the most brilliant mind Islam produced during this age of purposeless change and futile strife should have been a pessimist. Abu'l Ola, the blind poet and philosopher of Maara, describes in bitter verses and epigrams the vanity of that turbulent age—gone the glory and strength of the Omayyads; gone all belief: gone all hopes. The holy war against the Greeks was but a game of raid and counter raid, while Arabs, Persians, Kurds, promoted slaves, and freed men wrangled among themselves for place, power and territory; nothing seemed to endure, nothing to have authority, and nothing to be worth doing.

Born in 973 and dying in 1057 Abu'l Ola saw no less than

seven dynasties rise and fall between Maara his native town in Syria and Baghdad where he journeyed to study. No wonder that he cried, "I'm weary of a world where Princes only obey God when He bids them kill one another." But the day was dawning, though none perhaps knew it, when stronger, more virile, and nobler men were to appear upon the stage, and fight it is true, but for a time, at least, for nobler ideals than mere selfishness and greed.

Before dealing with the great conflict which was impending between Islam and Christendom it is important that we should glance at the condition of Armenia. Owing to the contradiction of the various authorities, it has been impossible in the preceding chapters to link up the history of Armenia with that of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor. As has already been pointed out, Armenia is easily assailable by an invader from east or west, but is difficult of access from the south; consequently the conquest of the country was never seriously undertaken by the Arabs. Owing to the difference of race and sect between the Armenians and Greeks the Byzantine Empire was never very firmly established west of Sivas; the Armenians did not welcome the Greeks, and the Greeks had no leisure to conquer the country.

Since Armenia, owing to its geographical conformation, was not cohesive in itself and neither of its great neighbours was able to assimilate it, we must suppose that the country fell into the hands of such native nobles and foreign adventurers as were able to assert their authority in various localities. Some were vassals of the Greek Emperor, some of the Caliph; some were Moslems, some were Christians, some were Armenians, and some were Kurds; some were the descendants of Arabian Emirs and their servants. Singularly enough, we find Christians among the vassals of the Caliphs, and Muslims among those of the Emperors.

Occasionally one of these nobles extended his dominions and nominally ruled the whole country; as for example the Christian Ashot, the Bagratunian, who in 886 commenced a reign of 25 years' duration, during which time he was Prince of Princes, and vassal of the Caliph, and founded a dynasty which ruled intermittently, and with ever-varying frontiers, until 1041.

But there apparently was never any real effective central power, either native or foreign, of long duration in the south: the influence of Muslim Emirs of Kurdish or Arabian stock preponderated; in the north and west, Christian Armenian chieftains struggled for supremacy among themselves.

The unrecorded but extremely probable factor in the situation was the gradual conversion to Islam of the nomadic Kurds who dwelt on the mountainous ridges. It is pretty certain that these nomads and tribesmen never became Christians, and that a formal adoption of Islam would be as easy and natural to them as it was to the Berbers of Africa, and the Turks of Turkestan. Consequently we must be permitted to imagine that in the 9th century the Christian cultivators of the valleys and plains were, as now, surrounded by highland shepherd tribes whose religion was supposed to be that of the Prophet of Mecca.

If this was the case it would explain why Arabian authors refer to Moslem Amirs being appointed in certain districts, while Armenian historians frequently mention dynastic names which to-day correspond with those Mohammedan Kurdish tribes —such as Mamekonians, Bagratunians, Rushdunians and Mandikanians, which have more than a chance resemblance to the modern Kurdish clans of the Mamikanli, Begranli, Rushkotanli, and Mendikanli.

In 1045 the Greek Emperor, Michael IV, removed the Armenian dynasty from northern Armenia, and transplanted it to the Taurus, establishing Gagig II, the direct descendant of Ashot, as King of lesser Armenia.

The Byzantine policy was to hold greater Armenia with Imperial troops, leaving the Armenian dynasty to guard the Cilician gates and the military roads between Asia Minor and Syria. So divided were the Moslems by schism and strife that this Byzantine expansion into lands long abandoned seemed almost like a preface to a re-establishment of Christendom in Asia. However, this was not to be; degenerate Islam soon received a fresh impetus from a little expected quarter.

We have already shown how every Mohammedan court and military office had become impregnated with Turkish stock. The Tulunids and the Turkish guards of Mamun were only

some of the swarms of slaves, prisoners, and mercenaries who had drifted from the rough camping grounds of the far East into the Moslem world. They came as a result of the constant wars of defence and aggression waged by the Moslem Amirs and dynasts of the northern and eastern borders of modern Persia, with the swarms of Turkish nomads who had fought the Parthians and Sassanians of old, and had continued the contest with the Mohammedan successor.

We have seen how from time to time Huns and Bulgarians and other tribes had appeared in Thrace and Macedonia, and how again and again hordes of Alans and Khazars had poured in through northern Armenia into Asia Minor and retired by the way they came.

The Arabs and Persians on the far eastern frontiers had long held this power in check, but disintegration had sapped the vitality of even those dynasties most renowned for their vigour, but not before the oncoming enemy had himself become a part of Islam.

The Turkish nomads in their years of war had been converted by their enemies, and infused into the religion of their adoption something of the primitive fervour and strength of the early Caliphs.

It is easy to understand how a martial creed demanding only courage and a simple belief in an obvious God must have appealed to a fierce race of wandering plainsmen. The way was prepared by the imported slaves and soldiers of Turkish race, the barriers were weakened, and the impulsive force of Islam itself set the new nation in motion. Down upon this busy, intriguing, broken civilisation came the first of the real Turks.

Headed by the great family of Seljuk, immense disciplined hordes poured into Persia from across the Oxus, scattering dynasties and kingdoms on their way. One by one the Amirs, kings, and dynasties of the outer marches succumbed to the irresistible onslaught. Persian, Arab, Kurd, Armenian, Greek, each in turn was accounted for and defeated. Although the Seljuk chieftains quarrelled among themselves and occasionally delayed their advance to settle their own differences, so immense was their military genius and so excellent their organisation

that barely forty-three years after their first crossing of the Oxus practically the whole of modern Persia and modern Turkey-in-Asia was ruled by them.

Buwayhids, Okaylids, Marwanids, and Mirdasids were chased out of the annals of history, never to appear again ; the Turkish guards of Baghdad, who had begun once more to assert their power, were reduced to impotence by their more virile kinsmen ; the Abbasid Caliphs were released from ignominious tutelage and allowed not only personal independence, but actual dominion in Irak.

The schismatic Fatimites were hunted out of Syria ; the Greeks after years of hard fighting were pushed out of Armenia, and as a consequence of the decisive battle of Melasgird, 1071, hurled back even to the walls of Constantinople. Indeed, by 1025 the only two dynasties which had not been conquered by either one or other of the branches of the Seljuk chieftains were the Arabian Mazadids of Hilla, and the transplanted Armenian Bagratunian dynasty of lesser Armenia. The latter, after a few years of obscurity under Byzantine suzerainty, had, on the murder of Gagig II, revived in the person of Rheupen, who, taking advantage of the utter rout of the Imperial forces, declared himself independent ruler of Armenia the Less. The strength of the new Armenian state lay in the geographical fact that the plateau on which it was situated, though provided with easy interior communication, was difficult of access from without, either on north, south, east, or west, and practically unapproachable in winter.

This refuge contained a warlike and unconquerable people, and to it flocked all the most venturesome elements of the Christian population of Armenia. Before reviewing the distribution of the Seljukian branches, we may take note of a striking illustration of the importance of geography in making history.

Though the Moslems had vainly endeavoured to conquer Asia Minor for near upon 400 years, they had signally failed ; the Seljuks overran and conquered the whole country with the exception of lesser Armenia in under ten years. The explanation is simple. Like the Parthians, the Arabs had been based upon Mesopotamia ; their way lay through the Cilician gates,

and their approach and lines of communication lay at right angles to the great parallel ranges of the interior. The Seljuks, like the early Scythians, the Achaemenid King of Kings, and the Alans of later times, began their advance from northern Persia. Once in Armenia, their armies marched directly down the valleys and plains between the ranges, so that no natural obstacle delayed their progress during the open weather, and once winter was over they were at liberty to take up their advance where the snows had arrested it.

It must not, of course, be imagined that the Seljuk dominion was in any sense of the word an empire. The Turkish soldier tribesmen followed their chieftains, who were but loosely knit together by a bond of blood and tradition, but no more ; each Seljuk endeavoured to make for himself a kingdom out of such lands as he conquered, and if a relative's territory seemed more easy to come by than that of a stranger, there was no hesitation about taking the nearest prize. Thus the three brothers, Chagor Bey, Tughril Bey, and Ibrahim Nyal, conquered the whole region independently. Ibrahim endeavoured to assume independence, but was captured and killed by Tughril, who, on the death of Chagor Bey, became head of the clan and nominally ruled the whole empire. Tughril was succeeded by Alp Arslan, the son of Chagor, who, on his succession, had to fight Kutulmish his uncle, and Kaward his younger brother, before he could concentrate his forces for the final conquest of the Greeks at Melasgird.

Alp Arslan was murdered by a Persian assassin and succeeded by Malik Shah, who was obliged to adopt a deliberate system of devolution of his dominions among his various relations. To his brother Tutush he gave Syria, Kirman to the descendants of his uncle Kaward whom he killed in battle, Asia Minor or Roum to Sulaiman the son of Kutulmish.

Though history compressed in a few brief words such as this is might give an impression of bloody savagery, it would be wrong to think that the Seljuks were mere predatory nomads, as partial historians love to describe them. Illiterate warriors though they may have been, they appreciated government and civilisation none the less. They reinforced the authority of the Caliphate, endowed mosques, encouraged arts and sciences,

fought anarchy and paganism with unswerving courage, and on the whole were humane, and apart from military affairs relied on the advice of the soundest financiers and statesmen they could find in their dominions.

The devastation of Armenia has been attributed to Seljuk rule, but with all deference to historians it may be submitted that the Seljuks left enough people for Timur to kill in the fourteenth century, and that the wonderful ornate mosques and medressehs, which are still the enduring monuments of Seljuk supremacy in Armenia, are obviously the work of native artists, and bespeak not only local wealth but a settled and satisfactory government under which people had not only time and leisure, but encouragement, to work.

Indeed, there is not a single town under the Seljuks where, amid the crumbling ruins of a later day, there do not remain some solid and lasting buildings which were erected by them.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### CRUSADES—ZANGIDS—AYUBIDS—MONGOLS—MAMLUKES

IN 1095 the map of modern Turkey-in-Asia showed Seljuk dominion at its height, but already the family was not only entirely divided, as described in the last chapter, but it was already beginning to throw out semi-independent vassal states, subject to the descendants of the generals and favourite slaves of the first conquerors. The Danishmand dynasty founded by an interpreter to one of the early Seljuk chiefs, becoming independent somewhere about 1085, began to rule the modern provinces of Syria and Kastamuni. Jerusalem and the surrounding district was subject to Ortuk-ibn-Aksab, a Turkoman leader of the armies of Tutush. Added to this source of weakness there can be little doubt that the population of Asia Minor, during the long years of raiding and war between Moslems and Greeks, had been so accustomed to disorder as to be difficult to assimilate to any rule.

Where such conquerors as the Seljuks took over a well organised district, in which the Mohammedan religion and law already obtained, it was not difficult for them to administer the country on existing lines ; but in Asia Minor, where government of any kind had been intermittent, and the population was not only Christian, but unaccustomed to Moslem dominion, the new comers were obliged to rely chiefly on force, and were hampered by the fact that all the systems of government they had studied or used—either in Syria, Mesopotamia or Persia—were uncongenial to regions whose traditions, such as they were, were Roman or Byzantine. By the establishment of the Seljuks there can be

little doubt that Islam had received a considerable accession of strength and vigour—the Shiite or Alid influence had been crushed out of existence, so far as the regions occupied by modern Turkey-in-Asia were concerned. The Shiite Buwayhids who had so degraded the Caliphate were destroyed as a political power, and the influence of the Fatimite Caliphs was confined to Egypt ; the extravagances of the sectaries who had woven Pagan, Zoroastrian and Manichaean tradition into Islam, and had produced the secret Anarchistic organisations of the Khazrites, later the Carmathians, and later still the Assassins, were put down with a strong hand.

The Seljuks, therefore, may be said to have laid the foundations of all that is virile or enduring in modern Islam; they carried the permanent Moslem occupation into Asia Minor ; they reinforced the degenerate world with a great influx of simple, courageous warriors and colonists ; they re-established the temporal and spiritual authority of the Caliphs ; they developed and made use of all the mental and intellectual resources of the peoples whom they conquered. Without any deliberate purpose, they prepared the way for the final establishment of an united Turkish Empire.

It was just at the moment when the divided Seljuk dynasties were at the height of their apparent power, and therefore in the first stages of weakness and decline, that one of the most wonderful epochs in European history was initiated by the first Crusade.

The relations between Christendom and Islam had hitherto been governed rather by policy and circumstance than by the warlike precepts of Mohammed or the theoretical brotherhood which is supposed to subsist between Christian states. Under the Omayyads and Abbasids, Christian subjects had, apart from the occasional persecution of particular princes, been treated with toleration, and even encouragement. Christian officials had generally been employed in all the public offices, and, though occasionally dismissed, were always reinstated when their superior capacities made them indispensable. Christian artists and architects had designed and decorated most of the great monuments west of the Tigris. Christians had, as we have seen, even been recognised as vassal rulers in Armenia. Christian

endowments and churches had usually been left in peace—while the shrines of Jerusalem itself had been as scrupulously respected by his successors as they were by old Omar, the first conqueror. Although the Byzantine Empire had scarcely ever been at peace with the Moslems since the defeat of Heraclius; on the other hand, the Abbasids had maintained cordial relations with the Christians of the West. Harun-el-Rashid not only entertained an embassy from Charlemagne, but further acknowledged him as guardian of the Holy Sepulchre and protector of Christian Pilgrims.

The gradual collapse of the Caliphate and the establishment of the lesser dynasties had, however, entirely altered the situation. The savage Berber mysticism which lay at the root of Fatimid policy had prompted the mad Hakim to destroy the Holy Sepulchre, to oppress the pilgrims, and to make the lives of his Christian subjects a burden to them. The small dynasties, ever at their wits' end for money, had naturally not observed any toleration or statecraft in dealing with non-Moslems under their sway. The occupation of Armenia by the Imperial Byzantine armies and the incursions of the Seljuks had, for the time being, made the Christians of Armenia the enemies instead of the vassals of the Caliph; while the Seljuks, themselves coming from the far East, naturally regarded Christians in a different light than did the early Moslems.

To Omayyads and Abbasids, Christians and Christianity were things known and to a certain extent understood; to the Seljukian chieftains they were no more than Zoroastrianism, paganism or pantheistic Persian philosophy.

On the other hand Christian Europe had also been drifting from a combination of both wind and tide towards an attitude of mind suitable for a holy war.

Firstly, the only central authority which survived with any tradition and prestige was the church, which was instinctively biassed towards the re-establishment of Christian rule in its old frontiers, particularly as Italy itself had only been cleared of Mohammedans with the greatest difficulty.

Secondly, the long wars between the Omayyads of Spain and their northern enemies, as well as the constant struggle for sea power between the Moslems of North Africa and the seamen of

Southern Europe, had been gradually making men accustomed to the idea of religious war from above.

Thirdly, there is one point which should certainly be insisted on, yet is frequently overlooked. Feudalism, the great underlying force of mediaeval Europe, was wholly based upon succession and the hereditary system. To assist in the establishment of a rightful heir upon his land was a natural duty which chivalry imposed. Consequently no appeal could have greater force in the mind of a Christian knight than that he should fight to regain for God His heritage, the Holy Land and the Tomb of Christ—since religion, law and justice, as he understood it, all imposed upon him the identical and imperious summons.

These three great influences were supplemented by a variety of minor causes: the increase of the pilgrimage as a penitential duty; the fact that pilgrimage was impossible except in armed bands; the desire of the church to find some legitimate outlet for the martial ardour of her turbulent children; the immense religious revival of the tenth and eleventh centuries, which had brought the thought of God and His saints into the smallest actions of men's lives; the atavistic instincts of the descendants of the barbarians who had over-run the Roman Empire, which beckoned them to wander forth in search of adventure; the desire of the Venetian and Genoese merchants to find out and capture the mysterious routes along which their Eastern commerce came; the desire of the European serfs for emancipation, and the probability of success owing to the gradual decline of the Moslem power in Spain and the Mediterranean; the repeated demands for help from Constantinople; and the just and natural ambition of the Western church to establish an united Christendom—all combined to press popes, kings, priests, warriors, poets, merchants, peasants, saints, and sinners in one direction.

Thus the Crusades began ere ever they were heard of—and by a strange paradox the crescent only became a Moslem emblem when the last Crusade had been closed in disaster.

The spark which brought Islam and Christendom into conflict lay in the Seljuk victory at the battle of Melasgird. The Greeks driven out of their new conquests and even out of their oldest territories, called out to Europe in despair. In a few years the

appeals of Alexius the Emperor were answered. In 1095 hordes of many-tongued, hungry, ragged, travel-stained pilgrims swarmed westward and poured into Constantinople, utterly unorganised, predatory, fanatical, and savage. These were the survivors of an even vaster mass of human refuse which the spirit of the age had set in motion, and which had been destroyed by the Hungarians in self-defence.

Alexius, who little desired or anticipated such assistance, knew not what to do with this rabble of runaways, beggars, thieves, cut-throats, and madmen. Though he fed them, they plundered his subjects; and though he harboured them, they fought with his troops, so that his capital was less defensible than ever.

Probably it was with some joy he saw them ferried over the Bosphorus, and with little sorrow he learned that the whole pack of them were destroyed on the first occasion the Seljuks met them in battle.

But this ignominious rabble was the mere froth which gathered on the surface of the movement; a year later Constantinople was again the scene of the concentration of another and very different force, headed by the master spirits of the age, and composed of well-armed knights and disciplined levies of infantry and cavalry.

Godfrey de Bouillon, Baldwin, Bohemund, Tancred, Hugh of Vermandois, Robert of Normandy, Stephen of Blois, Count Robert of Flanders—these were the men who led and organised the real striking force of the first Crusade. It is but sufficient to recite their names to see the glorious gathering of knights and retainers, to picture the huge, heavy horses thundering over the ground, to hear the strong Northern voices, to realise the deep masculine religious feeling and the bold venturesome spirit which had summoned this splendid array. Alexius the Greek was perhaps as little pleased with the efficiency of this second concentration, as he was with the wretched crew that had made his life a nightmare the year before.

The first were too dull, the second too independent, to serve as soldiers in the Imperial Army. From the first there was friction between the Crusaders and the government of Constantinople. Religious jealousy, Imperial pride and feudal independence were the natural causes of ill-feeling. The luxury

culture, commercial capacity and bureaucratic government of Constantinople were as antipathetic to the Crusaders as was the haughty roughness and independence of the knights and barons to the Greeks. After much bickering and delay the Crusaders at last set off upon their conquests (1097), nominally as soldiers of the Emperor. The course of the first Crusade followed almost identically the line of Alexander's army. It is the natural highway of soldiers and merchants, and is now the trace of the first two sections of the Baghdad railway—so eternally does geography dictate men's movements from the days of Xerxes to those of William II. The Seljuks, mere garrisons in a strange land, could not withstand the onslaught of religious zeal and northern strength. They fell back and back, fighting bravely, but ever on the defensive, until their opposition no longer obstructed the Crusaders' advance. Only when their enemies turned south through the Cilician gates did the Seljuks cease to retire, their main body having been pushed back to Sivas by the northern knights, while the regular Greek forces, operating by sea, had driven the remaining Turks out of Smyrna and the plateau of Konia. When the Crusaders passed the Cilician gates and reached the confines of Syria, they found land prepared for a conquest. The Fatimites of Egypt had driven the Ortukids out of Jerusalem; the Seljuk Ridwan-ibn-Tutush, governor of Aleppo, and Yagi Siare, governor of Antioch, were fighting Dukak-ibn-Tuthele of Damascus.

The quarrelling Seljuks endeavoured to rally to meet the common enemy; the Crusaders, flushed with victory, began to dispute among themselves over their spoils. For a time it seemed doubtful whether the goal of the soldiers of the Cross would be reached; but though Baldwin went far afield to found a Principality in Edessa, though Bohemund, the greatest captain of his age, remained in Antioch, satisfied that the strategic, commercial and natural advantages of that region were worth more than the spiritual blessings of the holy city itself, there still remained enough men to march on to Palestine. If the zeal of the Crusaders had flagged midway, it now fired with redoubled intensity—they flung themselves on Jerusalem in an ecstasy of religious passion. Here was at last the heritage

of God, the tomb where the Lord had laid after His sufferings; the mount where the Lamb of God had bled for the sins of the world, had been tortured for the crimes of the fierce, frail, simple men who came to do Him justice; here was the dear earth that He had trod; here where blessed Mary's heart had been pierced with the sharp sword of affliction; there above in heaven sat God the Father watching His soldiers fight; below, in the dark pit of earth, lay foul, stinking, hairy Satan, the enemy of man, whose wiles had cast dissensions in their ranks; there on the walls stood the black-faced Saracens, his children, doomed to perdition, polluting by their accursed presence, their foul creed, their magic, their lecherous lives, their impious prayers, the very birthright of the Lord God of Heaven. People are shocked that men with such thoughts as these in their minds—who had sacrificed home and love, had marched for two weary years, borne piercing winters and pestilential summers—should, in the moment of victory, have made the streets of Jerusalem red with blood, and thought it no sin.

With the conquest of Jerusalem began the strangest interlude in the history of our modern map of Turkey-in-Asia. Islam was rolled back, the whole of the Mediterranean littoral became Christian once more. Egypt alone survived unconquered. The Cross was carried as far east as the Syrian desert in the south, as far as Edessa in the north; while the whole of the western end of the Asia Minor peninsula was freed from Moslem dominion. But here again geography dictated the limits of the time and space which this new rule should endure; because the Moslems lost command of the sea the Crusades were possible, but a power solely based on sea command cannot penetrate far into a continent where the valleys run parallel to the littoral. The Crusaders held the coast but never established themselves in the strategic centre of what should have been their Empire. Had the Crusaders and Greeks united, the Seljuks would have been driven into Persia, and Christendom would have regained all that which had been lost, not for a brief period, but for all time.

However, the religious feud between the Eastern and Western churches and the utter incompatibility of spirit between feudal Europe and Imperial Constantinople, the growing rivalry be-

tween the Genoese and the Greek merchants, made common action almost unthinkable.

The moment Jerusalem had been captured, the uniting force which had held the Crusaders together was dissolved.

The countries of Tripoli, Edessa, and Antioch were independent principalities separate from the kingdom of Jerusalem some desired to conquer—some to trade with and some to pray in. By 1104 the Crusaders were quarrelling among themselves, fighting the Greeks and being beaten by the Moslems.

The moment the Crusaders were clear into Syria the Seljuks returned to Konia, for the Greeks vanished from the plateaus, content to retain their hold on the littoral, and preferring rather to fight the Crusaders for the towns of Cilicia than to attempt the permanent occupation of Anatolia.

The various strands of human instinct, thought and policy which intermingled between Baghdad and Constantinople during the twelfth century are marvellously complex and puzzling.

We see the Emperor and the Abbasid Caliph, the two theoretical rulers of the world, both sundered from all authority, yet retaining immense material riches and a curious misty prestige. Constantinople and Baghdad were the capitals of imaginary empires, yet still the centres of science, learning, wealth, culture and religion. Egypt was held by the weakening dynasty of Fatimites. Syria and northern Mesopotamia were divided between Moslem Princes and Crusaders; Anatolia and Armenia, between Seljuk chiefs and Armenian kings; southern Irak reverted once more to the dominion of the Caliph himself; just as the coast of western Asia Minor was slipping back into the feeble hands of the Greek Emperor. Beneath this variegated surface unperceived forces were at work. Among the Moslems, we have in the Assassins, an atheistic secret society terrorising the whole world, embracing all religions and philosophies, preaching a strange mixture of mysticism, atheism, and anarchism, and working towards some unknown end. We have as a counterpart of the Assassins the equally strange and mysterious association of the Knights Templars, theoretically the guardians of the Holy City and the Cross, and whose ultimate policy and beliefs were as obscure as they were occult.

It is indeed a remarkable fact that, at this period, race,

principle, and opinion were almost equally balanced on either side.

If Islam was divided between the Sunni Caliphate at Baghdad and the Fatimite Caliphate in Egypt, so was Christendom divided between the orthodoxy of the Greeks and the Catholicism of the Latins. If Turk and Arab quarrelled, so did the Norman and the Byzantine; if the Assassins had a hidden policy, so had the Templars.

The Seljuks at Konia were seldom at peace with the Danishmanids of Sivas; the Greeks were neither friendly with the kingdoms of Lesser Armenia nor with the Crusaders; the Frankish nobles quarrelled among themselves, just as did the Atabeys and Amirs of Syria and Mesopotamia. To add to the confusion of the picture, the Crusaders brought with them the laws and customs of mediaeval Europe, but in turn adopted the manners and dress of the peoples whom they conquered.

This fusion of East and West and friction of racial and schismatic feud brought many strange alliances. The Fatimites of Egypt were less bitter against the Frank King of Jerusalem than against the Abbasid at Baghdad. The Amir at Damascus looked upon the Crusaders rather as allies against his fellow Moslems than as infidels whom he should destroy. The feuds between the Templars and the Knights of St. John broke councils and combinations year in and year out. The Princes of Edessa, Antioch, and Tripoli were rather jealous neighbours than allies.

A traveller who wandered over the region described in our maps late in the 12th century would have encountered some strange men following some even stranger occupations. In Egypt he might have made friends with Mediterranean merchants of Italian extraction who made profitable deals in kidnapped children of European parentage. In Syria he could have conversed with the Saracen secretary of the grand master of the Templars, from whom he could have obtained an introduction to one of the Assassin chiefs of northern Syria; in Lesser Armenia he might have found mercenary Kurds who had fought for the kingdom of the Rheupenians; and in Anatolia, Bulgarian and Servian Christians who had freely borne arms for the Seljuks. In the border towns he could have made the acquaintance of Genoese and Venetians who were all things to

all men, so long as business was to be done. Had he stayed in Constantinople he would have learned that Crusaders were more dangerous than Turks; and indeed, had he chanced to be there in 1182, he would have been privileged to see a massacre of Latins by Greeks more terrible than that which, in the same streets, the Ottomans were destined to perpetrate on the Armenians 714 years later. Had he journeyed to Baghdad he would have found an Abbasid Caliph emerging from obscurity, not because there was a revival of Empire, but because those who had divided his predecessors' provinces had so shattered their power that they were sinking back to vassalage. Our traveller would have found this same Caliph, not marshalling a united Islam to attack the Crusaders, but urging a pagan Mongol Khan to destroy the Moslem Sultan of Khwarizm, whose power he feared. And while Christian and Moslem struggled in this network of religious, racial, and economic cross purposes, there was gathering in Central Asia a monstrous organisation of force and savagery which was destined to shake down the whole fabric of this already tottering world.

### § 2. *Salah-ed-din Azubi*

This extraordinary confusion which obtained during the Crusades makes it difficult to give a brief, clear, and consecutive account. We will first take the matter from a point of view of Christendom versus Islam. While the Crusaders were establishing their governments in Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa, and Tripoli, the provinces of northern Mesopotamia fell into the hands of Imad-ed-din Zangi, the son of a Turkish lieutenant of Tutush. He obtained the governorship of Irak and Jazirah in 1127, and by dint of continuous fighting contrived to overthrow the county of Edessa in 1144, and to establish his influence in North Syria. Dying in 1146, he left his dominions to be divided among his sons, Sayf-ed-din Ghazi receiving Mosul, and Nur-ed-din Mahmud-ibn-Zangi, Syria.

The strength of the crusading kingdom of Jerusalem lay in the fact that it was on good terms with the Amirs of Damascus, while the Fatimites of Egypt could be relied upon never to combine with any Moslems who were favourable to the Abbasids

at Baghdad. Unfortunately, the Crusaders broke terms with the Damascenes, and thus enabled Ayub, Nur-ed-din's governor of Baalbek, to occupy that city in his master's name. Nur-ed-din, once in possession of Damascus, saw his way to attack the kingdom of Jerusalem, but perceived at the same time that it was necessary to destroy the Fatimite Caliph in order to unite Islam for the effort. He therefore despatched his general, Shirkleh and Salah-ed-din, the son of Ayub, to Egypt.

The Crusaders realised too late their error of policy, but tried to retrieve it by endeavouring to save the Fatimite dynasty. For four years the generals of Nur-ed-din attacked the Fatimite power, and for an equal number of years the Crusaders defended it. At last the North Syrians were successful, and Salah-ed-din became Nur-ed-din's agent-general in Egypt. In 1174 Nur-ed-din died, and Salah-ed-din, no longer afraid of his master's jealousy, began to prepare for a scientific attack on the kingdom of Jerusalem. Before developing his advance he consolidated his forces. He first deposed the son of Nur-ed-din and assumed the government himself; he then incorporated Aleppo and Mosul in his dominions; and finally obtaining the recognition of the various minor independent Moslem princes in Syria as their sovereign, completed his march to supremacy by an alliance with the Seljuk ruler of Konia, Kilij Arslan II, and an attack on the kingdom of Lesser Armenia. As chief ruler of a united Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia, with those springs of wealth, the Euphrates, Tigris, and Nile in his hands, Salah-ed-din turned on Jerusalem. The city fell in 1187, and for a second time was taken by Moslems without massacre or pillage.

The fall of Jerusalem naturally provoked the peoples of Europe to further efforts; but these were so confused and ill-directed, and Salah-ed-din had so re-animated the Moslems, that no real advantage was gained. When in 1193 Salah-ed-din died, there was a fresh opportunity; but Venetian diplomacy deflected a vast mass of the crusading force from Syria and turned it against the Greeks, their rivals in trade. Thus, while Jerusalem remained in Saracen hands, Constantinople became the prey of the Crusaders. The Greek Empire, for some decades to come, only survived in Nicaea and Trebizond, while Constanti-

nople itself was occupied by a Latin dynasty, which endeavoured to administer the Empire on feudal and not imperial principles. If the Christians seemed determined to destroy their prospects, the Moslems appeared equally zealous to work their own damnation. The Seljuks of Konia, after long and desultory warfare, finally destroyed the Danishmand dynasty in 1172, but were forced to acquiese in the rise of the independent principality of Karaman, in Cilicia, where a Moslem dynasty was founded in 1220 by a renegade Armenian. The Abbasids of Baghdad encouraged the Mongols to attack the Shahs of Khwarizm, while the kingdom of Salah-ed-din was divided into seven principalities often at war with one another. So feeble indeed had Christendom and Islam grown, that in 1230 an excommunicated king at war with the Pope obtained Jerusalem by treaty from a Moslem Prince who desired to spite his rivals and relatives.

## § 3. *Hulagu*

The cosmopolitan chaos which prevailed in the middle of the thirteenth century was even more unspeakable than when the Arabs first bore down on the ruins of the Roman and Persian Empires. The Arab force was now spent, but Asia had yet the Mongols with which to smite humanity. In 1206 Jenghiz Khan had built up a vast confederation of Mongolian nomad clans in the far distant plains of Central Asia; by 1226 he had raided Khwarizm, Khorasan, Georgia, South Russia, Afghanistan and China—burning, slaying and destroying, leaving, as the old historians say, one man where 1,000 had been before. So terrible was the devastation of the Mongols in the outer marches, that hordes of homeless nomads came pouring across Persia into Armenia, Mesopotamia, North Syria, and Anatolia seeking for lands where they might pasture in peace. Among these countless thousands came the little tribe of Sulaiman, the father of Ertoghrul, the father of Osman. They went to Konia and were turned away; they retired to the Euphrates intending to seek their own land again, but at Kalat Ja'abar Sulaiman, their chief was drowned. In despair they retraced their steps to Anatolia, and being

now few in numbers were given a resting place at Angora. Strange indeed it seems that this forlorn band of homeless fugitives were destined to inherit the imperial cities of Baghdad and Constantinople, the throne of the Emperor, the office of the Caliph, and the holy shrines of Christendom and Islam. This little episode, which was destined to have such far-reaching results, and must have seemed of so little importance, is in itself a striking picture of the age: a small band of alien herdsmen wandering unchecked through crusades and counter crusades, principalities, empires, and states. Where they camped, how they moved and preserved their herds and flocks, where they found pasture, how they made their peace with the various chiefs through whose territories they passed, are questions which one may well ask in wonder.

The second kingdom of Jerusalem was not of long duration. The spiritual fervour of the crusades was dwindling in Europe, and the displaced nomads of Central Asia who could find no place on the northern plateau poured southward. Putting themselves under the Sultan of Egypt, they ravaged Syria in 1244 as it had never been ravaged before. The weakened fabric of the crusading kingdom could not withstand the onslaught. Jerusalem was taken and plundered, and the Templars and Hospitallers were utterly overthrown at Gaza; and though the savages dispersed to be heard of no more, the power of the Crusaders was shattered for ever.

The line of Salah-ed-din was degenerate, but the Egyptian branch had fallen under the sway of an able minister, the Mamluk general Baibars. The battle of Gaza was won not only by the savage nomads but in conjunction with the Mamlukes of Egypt. These latter troops, raised from young slaves, many perhaps of European parentage, were brave and fanatical in battle as they were turbulent in peace. It was to the vigour and valour of these strange troops that we owe the preservation of Eastern culture, literature and art, for they alone stood between the world and the catastrophe which was about to fall upon it.

The first conquest of Jenghiz Khan has been briefly mentioned in this chapter. We have heard, as it were, the muttering of the coming terror; we have seen how the homeless nomads came

drifting westward like puffs of dust across the plain that come before the storm. In 1257 Hulagu, the grandson of Jenghiz Khan, had set out upon his great western raid. The Mongols had established themselves in Persia in the ruins of the kingdom of Khwarizm, and it was from thence that Hulagu was sent forth by his brother Mangu to conquer the south-west.

Reading accounts of this Mongol invasion is terrifying. Everything seems to break before it. The world which the Mongols attacked was weak, divided, and effete. The invaders were well led, brave, numerous, and highly organised; their mechanical artillery borrowed from China was portable, specialised, and superior to anything that had yet appeared in the field. In an advance they were absolutely careless of all consequences and ruthless in their severity; their objects were plunder and destruction, pure and simple; they had no desire to govern, convert or colonise. If we might imagine a million Zulus who could shoot like Boers, equipped with aeroplanes, dirigibles, heavy mobile artillery, a highly organised supply column, and led by Napoleon in person, suddenly appeared in modern Europe, we should have some idea of what the coming of Hulagu meant to his victims.

Besides the regular Mongols, Hulagu did not want for allies. Conquered peoples were swept wholesale into his forces; Chinamen, Georgians, Afghans, Persians, and Turks who had lost their homes and means of livelihood, and now lived only for plunder, were carried along in the wake of the horde. The network of Persian principalities crumbled at the first blow. The Assassins, who from Alamut had terrorised the world for a century, were disposed of like a wasps' nest in the hands of an expert schoolboy. Sweeping on to the south-west the huge force poured into Irak and surrounded Baghdad itself. The wealth of ages lay at the conqueror's feet. Baghdad was besieged—schism and rebellion broke out within—the irresistible forces thundered without—Baghdad fell. The town was sacked and burnt—the inhabitants were massacred—the women carried off into slavery—the Abbasid Caliph was executed—gold was thrown about like lead, and long streams of caravans marched eastward carrying away the incredible booty. The

most fatal accident of all, in this colossal disaster, was the irretrievable ruin of the whole system of irrigation of Mesopotamia. Baghdad was destroyed and with it the very sources of life. Mesopotamia, which had known wealth for perhaps five thousand years, now sank back into desert and swamp. This is a calamity almost beyond human comprehension—a populous land reduced to emptiness; the granary of the world, a wilderness of reeds and sand. The region whence Semite, Elamite, Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Seleucid, Parthian, Sassanian, Omayyad and Abbasid had successively drawn perennial riches, became, under the devastating hand of Hulagu, a place of mounds and sherds, a waste of unfruitful waters intersecting arid plains of dust and scrub. Having destroyed the work of three hundred generations of men in a single year Hulagu retired to Persia, leaving a famine and desolation which endure to this day. His campaign was but begun. Fixing his headquarters in Azerbaijan, he began his advance on Armenia and Egypt. His route lay through Akhlat, Jazirah-ibn-Omar, Diarbekir, Hanan, Seruj and Mumbuj. Each he found a prosperous and wealthy city; each he left a heap of ruins. Thence to Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus. Supposed to favour Christians, he made use of the troops of the King of Lesser Armenia; but, on the other hand, he was as great a scourge to the Crusaders of Sidon as to any other of the wretched people who were unfortunate enough to lie in his path.

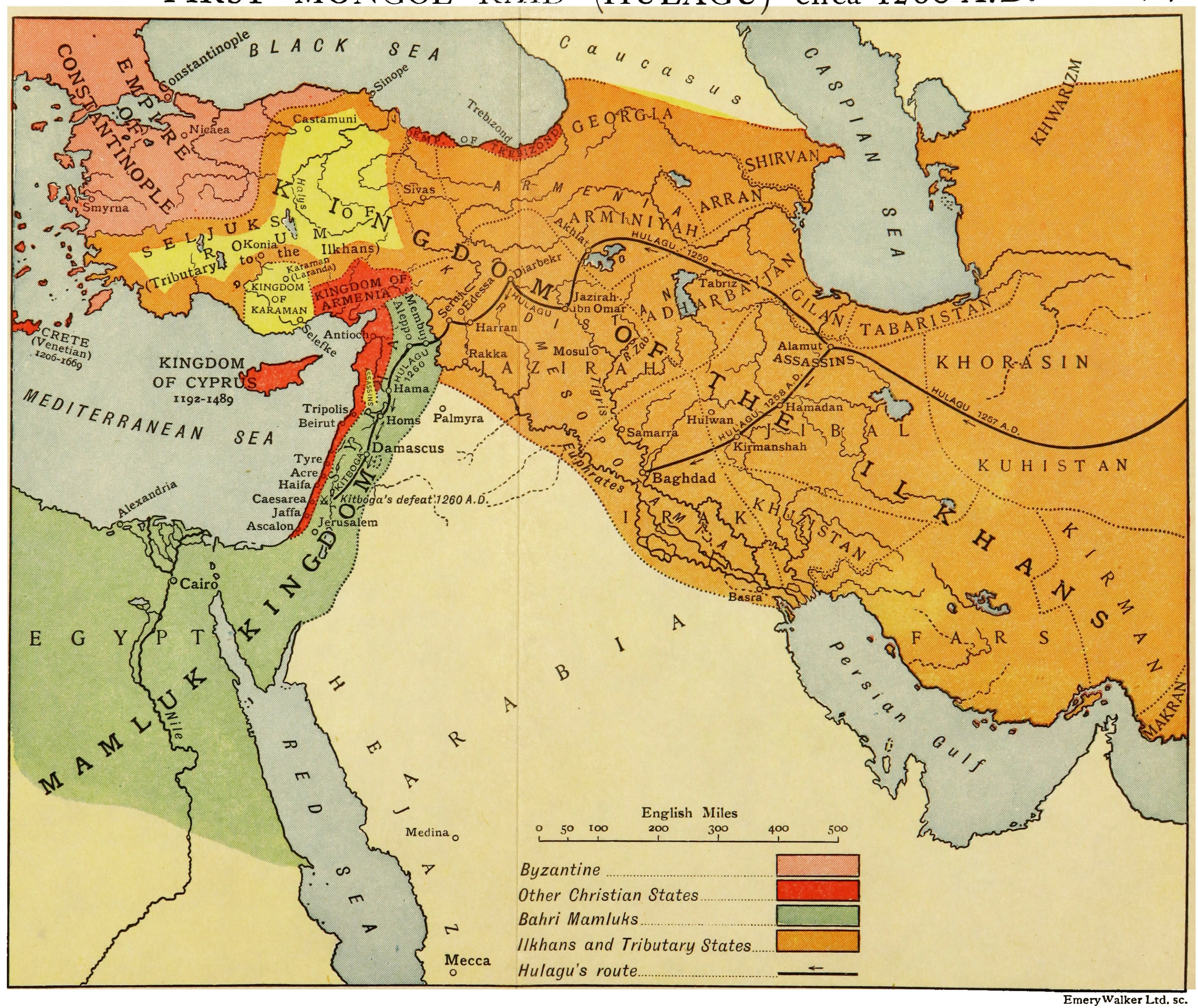
It was while at Damascus that Hulagu received the news of the death of his brother Mangu, which event obliged him to return to Azerbaijan, destroying Meyafarkin on his way home. The completion of the southern campaign, which was to have included Egypt and North Africa, he entrusted to his general Kitboga. Under his master's directions Kitboga marched south and met the Bahri Mamluke Sultan of Egypt, Kuttuz; for in 1250 the Egyptian branch of the Ayubids had finally disappeared and a line of vigorous Mamluke chieftains had taken its place.

Accustomed to uninterrupted success, the Mongols advanced in high spirits against an enemy who faced utter destruction in event of defeat. The Mamlukes had no way out of Egypt.

To retire was to perish in the western desert; to take to the sea was to fall into the hands of the crusading fleets. The Mamlukes met the Mongol onslaught with the valour of despair. The result was unexpected: Kuttuz was wholly victorious, the Mongols were routed, and Kitboga himself was killed. Thus ended the great raid of Hulagu.

# FIRST MONGOL RAID (HULAGU) circa 1260 A.D.

(X)




Emery Walker Ltd. sc.

# CHAPTER XXV

## THE GREAT CHANGE

### § 1. *Mesopotamia*

THE period which elapsed between 1260 A.D. and the year 1500 A.D. was one (as far as our story is concerned) of radical change both political, economic, and if a loose term may be still more loosely used, ethnological as well.

The factors which went to make this period decisive are worthy of consideration. The destruction of the causes of wealth in Mesopotamia had plucked, so to speak, the keystone out of the ancient structure. The effect of the disappearance of this age-long prosperity is hard to measure, it is like trying to think of what England would be if deprived of coal, or France supposing the East Mediterranean became a sandy desert, or Bengal if the Ganges' waters were so deflected that the river found a passage to the sea at Bombay instead of at Hughli. The storehouse of culture and the fountain of commerce practically ceased to exist. The loot and plunder of Baghdad gave ephemeral enrichment to the state which Hulagu founded in Azerbaijan, the refugee scholars, and craftsmen of Mesopotamia, and the last survivors of the Abbasid House, brought increased prestige and culture to the court of the Mamluke Sultans of Egypt, but these were the merest flotsam and jetsam of disaster. A thousand mule loads of gold and jewels to Persia, or a thousand penniless architects, philosophers, dyers and tanners in Cairo were as nothing in compensating force to the disappearance of canals which for 5000 years had supported abundant life and produced certain and perennial

prosperity. Henceforward we must look at Mesopotamia not as a centre of vitality but as an hiatus in the scheme of things.

The withering away of the riparian paradise of the south went side by side, with a complete ethnic transformation of the Anatolian peninsula. The invading Seljuks whose power had ebbed and flowed through the decaying structure of the Byzantine Empire had already accustomed the peoples of Asia Minor to rulers of Turkish stock; the influx of fugitive tribes like the Ottomans and the raiding tribes like the Mongols introduced a permanent Turkish element into the population. Semi-independent Byzantine nobles survived here and there, Byzantine cities remained intact—like Philadelphia, Nicaea and Trebizond—but nevertheless the peninsula was becoming a Turkish country. When Ibn Batuta travelled from Brusa to Sinope in the middle of the fourteenth century he passed through a region which was not unlike the Anatolia of to-day, he was entertained in Turkish villages, he slept in Turkish khans, and when lost in the snow between Mudorni and Boli he refuged in a Turkish house the door of which was opened by an old Moslem who had known no other land. Once he passed the night in a Greek town with a Turkish Bey in charge of it, but for the rest Seljuk government and Asiatic colonists had broken Byzantine tradition and religion. The indigenous population accepted emigration, subjection or conversion as the inevitable terms of Mohammedan conquest; inter-marriage of Turkish men with Grecian women, Seljuk moderation in religious matters, the presence of Christian mercenaries in the ranks of the Turkish field armies, made the existence of Turks seem an enduring part of nature, and there grew up a race which on strict analysis, though it might contain Greek, Iranian, and aboriginal elements, was Turkish in tongue and Mohammedan in religion.

The Turkification of Anatolia and the desiccation of Mesopotamia were not the only alternating influences affecting our map, the Imperial machinery at Constantinople had been so dislocated by the Latin interregnum that a revival of empire was beyond expectation. The essential decadence of the crusading spirit combined with the destructive rivalry of the Genoese and

Venetians for the strategic and commercial command of the Mediterranean made an end of all hope of concerted aggression from Europe.

## § 2. *The End of the Crusades*

The general disposition of affairs in the eighth decade of the thirteenth century was approximately as follows : on the Christian side the Crusaders still occupied Antioch, Tripoli, and Acre, hoping, in vain, that Latin Christendom might yet unite to reconquer what had been lost.

In Lesser Armenia the Rheupenian dynasty maintained its hold on the small but warlike people of the southern bend of the Taurus, where a lonely group of Christians still held on against overwhelming odds, enduring poverty, defeat and famine for faith and liberty ; at Constantinople the Greeks were endeavouring to collect such crumbs and crusts of Empire as the Latin usurpers had not wasted or trodden under foot.

For Christendom this is a period of humiliation and shame relieved only by the glorious efforts of the divided few who struggled for a cause which must have seemed, and was, hopelessly lost.

As against the dwindling forces of the west we see an eastern world now wholly changed ; with Azerbaijan as a centre, Hulagu had established a government which stretched from India to the Euphrates and formed a dynasty known as that of the Il Khans of Persia, who were nominally the vassals of the distant Khakan of the Mongols but really independent Sovereigns. Hulagu and his immediate successors derived their power from the fact that although not Moslems themselves they could rely on the support of large numbers of warlike Mohammedan Turks who were bound to them by ties of kinship and tongue, and yet at the same time were able to command the devoted service of all Christians in their dominions whether Armenian or Nestorian. Being neutral in the great subjects of controversy, yet well seconded with material power, the Il Khans had a wide scope and freedom in policy, they could employ whom they desired in their dominions, whether Christian, Atheist, or Moslem, and could negotiate freely with Pope, Armenian, Crusader or Turkish Prince.

Tributary to the Il Khans were the Seljuks of Konia, who by a wise dispensation were not only subjected but divided, one Prince, Izz-ed-din, being appointed ruler west of the Kizil Irmak, while Rukn-ed-din, his brother, was given all the Seljukian territories east of the same river, the Karaman dynasty being left independent as it had been before the advent of the first Mongol hordes.

In Syria and Egypt the Mamluke Sultans not only retained their hold but became the first power of the Moslem world; supported by the wealth of the Delta and the Nile Valley, the Mamlukes reinforced their moral position by the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate in Cairo. The Mamluke Sultan, no matter how base might be his origin, had among his employees the exalted person of the Commander of the Faithful, who could give spiritual sanction to military and civil projects. The first of these re-established Caliphs attempted to return to Baghdad and to assert his power once again in Mesopotamia, but he lost not only his life but the army the Mamluke Sultan had lent him, and thenceforward the only active operation that his successors were allowed to perform unaided was the investiture of their servant and master the ruler of Egypt.

The Mamluke line differed from all other dynasties we have seen in its constant unflagging vigour and activity: although the reigns of the Sultans were short; and though numbers died at the hands of assassins and rivals, though the Mamlukes themselves were ever divided into hostile factions, the Egyptian power never grew flaccid, helpless, or palace-stricken as nearly all other Eastern governments became in the course of time.

The causes of Mamluke vitality are not difficult to distinguish; the Mamlukes themselves were selected slaves of good courage and physique, the Sultan, whether he died a natural death or no, was seldom succeeded by his son, but frequently by one of his chief officers backed by Mamlukes who had fought their way up from the ranks. The Mamluke Sultans, whether of the Bahri or the Burji lines,[1] were nearly all men of sound constitu-

[1] The Mamlukes were divided into two classes, the Bahris and the Burjis—the former took their name from the act that their barracks were situated on an island in the Nile (Bahr), while the latter, composed chiefly of Mongols and Circassians,

tion and spirit culled from a war-like oligarchy into which fresh blood was being continually drafted. Such rulers, brutal, tyrannical and cruel though they were, spared Egypt from the devastating influence of debauched imbeciles, degenerates, monomaniacs, and weaklings, the inevitable products of a royal harem in a Moslem state.

The struggle for supremacy first lay between the Il Khans of Persia and the Mamlukes of Egypt, in which the former used the Crusaders, Armenians, and Seljuks as pawns in the game, but the Mongol power having deprived itself by devastation of the resources of Mesopotamia, and being too remote to keep either in close touch with the Franks or strict control over its Turkish vassals, were unable to bring matters to a decisive issue. When the Il Khans degenerated by local influence into ordinary Moslem dynasts of the Shia sect their aggressive power entirely vanished and Anatolia drifted out of their grasp. The Seljuk line being utterly discredited by vassalage and division the peninsula fell under the sway of ten independent Turkish Amirs, whose territories coincided almost exactly with that of the Asiatic themes of the Byzantine Empire,[1] such slaves are men of geographic circumstance.

The Mamlukes, unlike their Mongol rivals, never stayed their efforts to extend their dominion, and when the Crusaders were

were quartered in the citadel of Cairo (Burj). The Burjis and Bahris were consistent rivals during the whole of the Mamluke period in Egypt, the Bahris being generally in power from 1279 to 1382, after which year Burji supremacy lasted unchallenged until the advent of the Ottomans.

[1] The relation of the dynastic divisions of Anatolia under the 10 independent Turkish rulers to the Byzantine themes of Asia will be easily understood from the following table :—

| Name of Theme. | Name of founder of dynasty. | Turkish name of district. |
|---|---|---|
| Anatolicum. | Karaman. | Karaman. |
| Bucellarium. | Timur Bey. | Kizil Ahmadli. |
| Optimatum. | Osman. | Ertoghrul. |
| Obsequium. | Osman. | Khödavendighiar. |
| Western Thracesium. | Kermyan Bey. | Kermyan. |
| Eastern Thracesium. | Hamid Bey. | Hamid. |
| Northern Samos. | Aglan Bey. | Karasi. |
| Central Samos. | Saru Khan. | Saru Khan. |
| Southern Samos. | Aidin Bey. | Aidin. |
| Western Cibyraeotum. | Mentesha Bey. | Mentesha. |
| Eastern Cibyraeotum. | Tekke Bey. | Tekke. |

unsupported by Europe and abandoned by the Il Khans, the Egyptian power advanced rapidly—taking Antioch in 1268, Tripoli in 1289, and finally Acre, the last Frankish stronghold, in 1291. These disasters left Lesser Armenia to fight on alone, obtaining such transient support as it could from Cyprus and Rhodes, where the last shadow of crusading power still maintained a semblance of life.

### § 3. *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*

The rise of the Ottoman power in the peninsula of Asia Minor must be attributed to the strategic and political situation caused by the racial and economic changes of the thirteenth century—the Seljuks had collapsed, the Il Khans were degenerate, and the Mamlukes, handicapped by a distant base, could not hope to rule beyond the Taurus, the Byzantine Empire but a shadow of its former self. Yet Anatolia, though divided into many principalities, had been united by language, religion, and race. These latter cohesive elements within coinciding with the weakening of the aggressive force without offered an inviting opportunity to statesmanship and courage.

In the ruling family of the Ottoman clan we find a house the members of which possessed a continuity of thought and purpose, and a capacity for diplomacy and generalship, unequalled in the history of oriental dynasties. When last we saw these tribesmen, Ertoghrul their chief was craving admittance and shelter in the Seljuk dominions; given lands at Angora the Ottomans became the loyal and devoted servants of their protector. When the Seljuk dynasty divided and declined and its officers declared themselves independent, the Ottomans alone remained dutiful to their overlord. Instead of engaging in quarrels with rival Amirs Ertoghrul, and his son Osman after him, concentrated their efforts solely against the Greeks; starting from Angora they worked their way into the Byzantine territory, annexing Karaja Hissar, Ainegul, Bilejik and Yar Hissar.

During this period the Byzantine Empire sank from one humiliation to another; stripped of wealth by the Venetian and Genoese traders, who had seized the carrying trade of the world, and of its territories by the Franks, Constantinople had no

subjects from which to recruit armies, and no money to hire soldiers. Yet Imperial tradition was so strong that the Emperors, rather than permit the defence of the narrowing frontiers to rest in the hands of the feudal nobility which had grown up in Bithynia during the crusades, called in Catalan bands of mercenaries to take their place. These adventurers came to save, but stayed to take in plunder those rewards which could not be found by a depleted exchequer. The Ottoman advance was doubly assisted by the ruin attending on the Catalan depredations and the natural disloyalty of the Greek feudal lords, who, finding that the Emperor would not tolerate their independence, sided with the Turks, whose success seemed less fatal to their interests than the supremacy of Constantinople.

When the last of the great Seljuks, Ala-ud-din II, died in 1296, Osman, who had succeeded his father, Ertoghrul, in 1288, declared himself independent Sultan of the region he had hitherto held in fief, but though independent, Osman was careful not to embroil himself in war with his Moslem neighbours, and continued his advance against the Greeks. Succeeded by his son Orkhan in 1326, the same policy was pursued with consistent energy; by 1338 Brusa and Nicaea had been captured, and an adroit stroke of diplomacy incorporated the independent Turkish principality of Karassi in Orkhan's dominions, placing the whole south-eastern coast of the Marmora in Ottoman hands.[1]

Once in this commanding position, Orkhan stayed his hand against Constantinople. Just as he and his father had made use of the Byzantine nobles to introduce the Ottoman forces into western Asia Minor, so now did Orkhan use the Byzantine power to insinuate himself into Europe. Taking advantage of a political intrigue at Constantinople, Orkhan put himself at the disposal of John Cantacuzenus, the Mayor of the Imperial Palace, and as the price of his military assistance obtained Theodora, the daughter of his patron, in marriage for himself and a permanent foothold in Europe for his dynasty. When

[1] These conquests were not only the results of fighting but diplomacy, alliances with independent Byzantine lords, treaties with Greek towns, and marriages with Grecian women were all part of the Ottoman advance.

Orkhan died in 1359, Ottoman power was not only firmly established in Asia, but a good beginning had been made in Thrace and Gallipoli. The towns of Rodosto, Bulair, Malgara and Ipsala had been taken and colonised and were being prepared as bases for westernly expansion. The conquests and diplomatic victories of Orkhan were not the only achievements of his reign; when Murad succeeded Orkhan he inherited not only valuable possessions but the headship of the only Moslem state in Asia Minor which possessed moral and material resources of a permanent kind. All through his reign, in times of peace and war, Orkhan had encouraged art, literature, science and commerce. Roads, bridges, schools and pious foundations of this date, which endure to this day, show that the first Ottomans were not merely the rulers of a barbarous horde such as modern writers love to imagine.

The patronage of learning and the endowment of schools resulted in the spread of the various contemplative and studious orders of Dervishes, such as the Bektashis and Mevlevis, who with their affiliated oblates formed a strong yet tolerant support to organised religion. The most important outcome of this policy was the establishment of a regular standing army. The world had already seen in the Templars and the Mamlukes of Egypt religious corporations of a military kind. It remained for the Ottomans to organise the Janissaries. These troops were formed of levies of Christian youths to the extent of one thousand per annum, who were affiliated to the Bektashi[1] order of der-

[1] The early connection of the Janissaries of the Bektashi dervishes is a matter which opens up a very interesting field for speculation.

The story that Hadji Bektashi was an illustrious Moslem saint who founded the order and blessed the first levy of captive Christian children who were destined to serve as Moslem Janissaries, has now been proved to be a mere legend.

The original Janissaries of the fourteenth century were, according to d'Ohsson, Christian levies fit for immediate service who were not obliged to become Moslems; the earliest historical mention of the Bektashi order by name is in the sixteenth century, which coincides with the reformation of the Janissaries by Sulaiman I. However, there is no doubt that the Bektashi doctrine which includes the transmigration of souls, a mystic reverence for Ali, the performance of certain ceremonies akin to the Christian Eucharist and Penance, neo-pythagorean teaching, and certain customs possibly connected with mythraicism, flourished long before the order was generally recognised.

From Ibn Batuta we know that in every Anatolian Turkish town there were guilds

vishes, and though at first not obliged to embrace Islam, were one and all strongly imbued with the mystic and fraternal ideas of the confraternity to which they were attached. Highly paid, well disciplined, a close and jealous secret society, the Janissaries provided the newly-formed Ottoman state with a patriotic force of trained infantry soldiers, which, in an age of light cavalry and hired companies of mercenaries, was an invaluable asset. As a result of this policy of internal development, which ran side by side with that of expansion, the Ottomans gained a prestige which no other Moslem state enjoyed.

The relations between the Ottoman Sultans and the Emperors has been singular in the annals of Moslem and Christian states. The Turks had been involved in the family and dynastic quarrels of the Imperial City, were bound by ties of blood to the ruling families, frequently supplied troops for the defence of Constantinople and on occasion hired parts of its garrison to assist them in their various campaigns; the sons of the Emperors and Byzantine statesmen even accompanied the Turkish forces in the field, yet the Ottomans never ceased to annex Imperial territories and cities both in Asia and Thrace. This curious intercourse between the House of Osman and the Imperial government had a profound effect on both institutions, the Greeks grew more and more debased and demoralised by the shifts and tricks that their military weakness obliged them to adopt towards their neighbours, the Turks were corrupted by the alien atmosphere of intrigue and treachery which crept into their domestic life. Fratricide and parricide, the two crimes which most frequently stained the annals of the Imperial palace, eventually formed a part of the policy of the Ottoman dynasty. One of the sons of Murad the First embarked on an intrigue with Andronicus, the

and associations of men who met and combined prayer, mystic dancing, and other rights with social intercourse.

The Christian Janissaries would naturally be influenced by Moslem philosophers who shared so much in common with Christianity; the ideas of a brotherhood based on an organisation of circles or lodges, would also appeal to strangers in a strange land.

When we learn that the Janissaries, whether Christians or no, were under the tuition of Moslem doctors, it is not difficult to imagine how the mystic and the Christian met, and how between them they evolved an organisation and a doctrine compatible with their mutual situations.

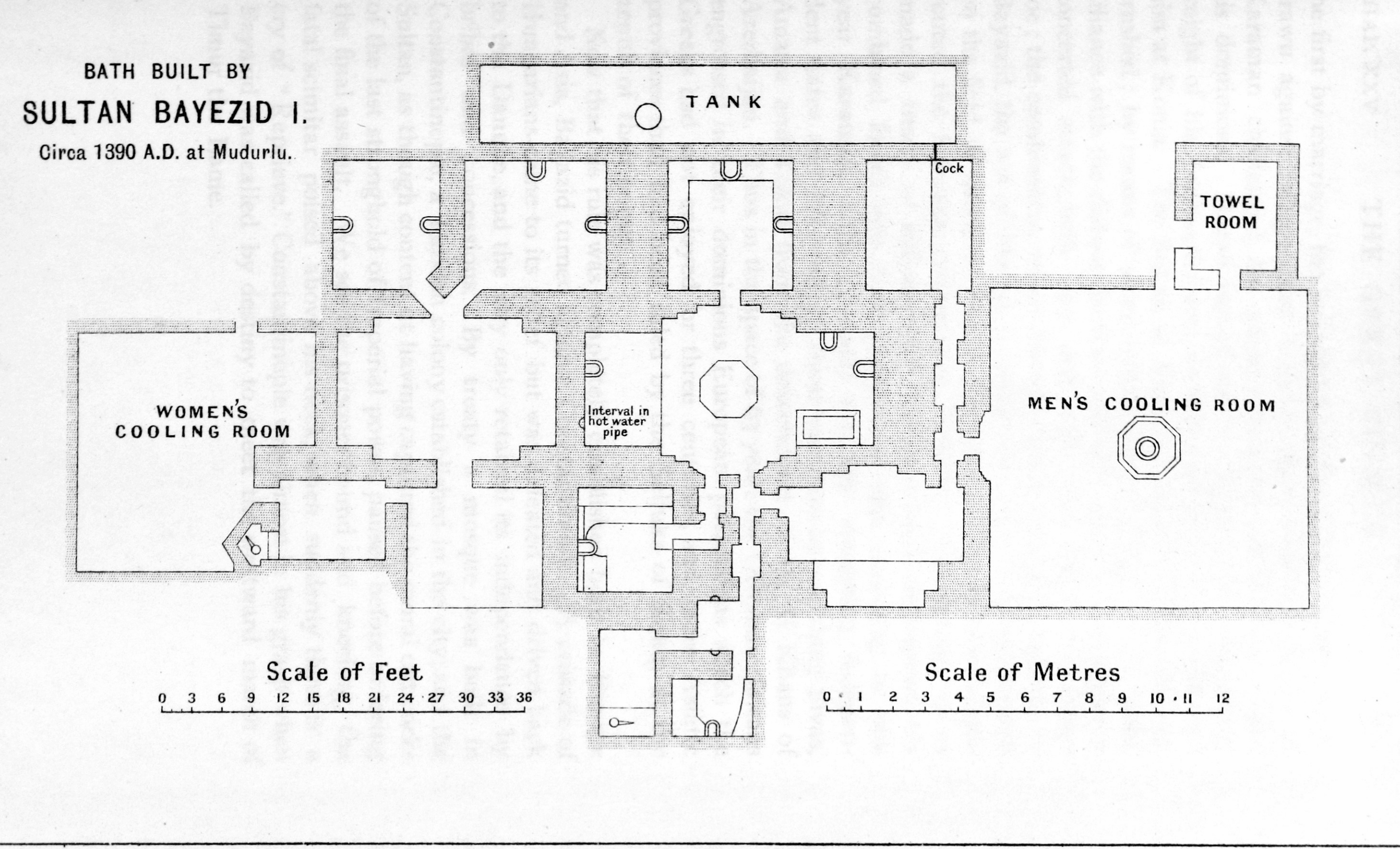
son of the Greek Emperor, to murder their respective fathers; Bayazid the First celebrated his succession by the execution of his brother. These atrocious acts were only the first of a series of similar conspiracies and murders which have blackened the history of each succeeding Ottoman generation.

However, it would be wrong to suppose that this mutual influence was equally bad for both parties; the Greeks, it is true, gained nothing, but the Turks profited from the point of view of stability by the lessons which they learned from their victims. Since the decay of the Abbasids, all Eastern Empires had crumbled away, when the founder of a dynasty died, owing to the vicious habit of regarding the state as a property to be divided among heirs rather than as a social organisation to be maintained intact. The Ottomans learned from the Greeks how sons were to be prevented from becoming independent princes, and governors from becoming vassals; further they adopted from their neighbours the system of a regularised bureaucracy by which alone finance, civil administration and war could be kept in the firm hand of a central government. It was to the right understanding of these axioms of Imperial rule which the Ottomans learned from the Greeks that we must attribute the past and present vitality of the Ottoman line. It was the very irony of fate that the Greeks, who had no territory, should by mere propinquity impart the arts of kingship to those who were to reconquer their long-lost dominions.

Built upon such sure foundations the Ottoman Empire spread apace; in the reign of Murad the expansion was still in a westerly direction and it was not until the frontiers were extended to the Adriatic, the Danube and Thessaly, that the Sultan began to look towards Asia for fresh territory. His armies not only strengthened by the Janissaries but further with Servian and Bulgarian levies, his treasury filled with tribute from the cities of Epirus, Macedonia, Bosnia and Thrace, his prestige enhanced by possession of the Imperial Capital of Adrianople, made the Ottoman Sultan loom terrible in the eyes of the independent Turkish Princes of Asia Minor.

In their eastward moves, the Ottomans followed their former policy, and as in Europe used diplomacy before warfare. Under Murad, the principalities of Kermyan and Hamid were annexed,

To face p. 282.


BATH BUILT BY
SULTAN BAYEZID I.
Circa 1390 A.D. at Mudurlu.
TANK
Cock
TOWEL ROOM
WOMEN'S COOLING ROOM
Interval in hot water pipe
MEN'S COOLING ROOM
Scale of Feet
0 3 6 9 12 15 18 21 24 27 30 33 36
Scale of Metres
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the first by marriage, the second by purchase, nor was the sword drawn against independent Turkish states until the Sultan of Karaman challenged the power which was destined to engulf his dominions. Murad turned on his Asiatic rival the whole weight of his Janissaries and Servian auxiliaries and defeated him at Konia. The Sultan of Karaman though beaten was not crushed; by means of secret messengers he contrived to make alliance with the distant Servians and Bosnians, and organised a concerted attack, both from east and west, against his hated foe; the combination failed through the energy and capacity of Bayazid, the son of Murad, for when his father was assassinated on the field of battle in Servia, Bayazid took up the campaign, routed the Servians, crushed the Bosnians, then turning about made a treaty of alliance with Constantinople and hurled his combined forces into Asia, conquering and annexing in one year Karaman, Kizil Ahmadli and the remaining independent states and followed up these successes by snatching Sivas, Amasia and Tokat from the descendants of the Il Khans of Azerbaijan. Thus in the space of 63 years the Ottoman Sultans engrossed in their dominions European possessions which the Greeks had not enjoyed for three centuries, and more Asiatic provinces than had been ruled by the Seljuks of Roum at the zenith of their power.

Now that his rule was completely established both in Europe and Asia, Bayazid turned against Constantinople. A crusade of Hungarians came to its relief but was defeated and driven back to the Danube, and the city only retained its independence by bribes and concessions. By treaty a mosque was built in Constantinople, a Turkish colony established in the city, and the Sultan, as though content at having captured the moral outworks of the last stronghold of Imperial power, paused before ordering the final assault. We see the prisoner bound and kneeling, the fatal scimitar poised above his neck, when suddenly there is a cry of "Reprieve." Constantinople was almost in his grasp when Bayazid was called by destiny to meet the westward march of Timur the Lame.

# CHAPTER XXVI

## TIMUR

WHILE sketching the rise of the Ottoman power in the previous chapter, it has been impossible to keep pace with the course of events in the regions which occupy the eastern and southern portions of our map.

The power of the eleven Khans subsided into the hands of the chieftains of those Turkish clans which had formed the nucleus of Hulagu's armies; the tribes which alone concern us are the Jalayrs, who, under Hassan Burzug, established an independent state in Irak in 1336, the Ak Koyunlu, who formed a principality in the vicinity of Bitlis in 1378, and the Kara Koyunlu, who ruled in Jazirah and Diarbekir from 1388 onwards.

The Bahri Mamlukes conquered the kingdom of Lesser Armenia in 1375, and reduced it to the status of an Egyptian province—Leo VI, last Armenian King, being led away to captivity from which he only escaped to die in miserable obscurity in a religious house in Paris. In Leo disappears the last symbol of Christian independence in Asia, and the last representative of a line of kings which had continuously endured from prehistoric times.

By 1380 the whole of our map had fallen entirely under the sway of Turks and Mamlukes, and it seemed for a moment doubtful whether the struggle was to be between the Ottomans of the west and the Jalayrs of the east, or between the Mamlukes of the south and the Kara Koyunlu of the north. But once again the petty quarrels and factions which raged between the

Ægean and the Euphrates were destined to be submerged beneath another Eastern avalanche.

The Empire of Jenghiz Khan in Central Asia had become more and more impregnated with Mohammedanism. Superior civilisation of the conquered, the natural bias of warlike nomads for a religion at once simple and martial, the presence of Mohammedan jurists and scholars at the court of the Khahan and his viceroys, the convenience of Moslem law, and the feebleness of Buddhism and Shamanism, had all combined to spread the religion of the prophet among these barbarians of the north-east; the Empire of Jenghiz Khan broke up among his children's children, their officers and deputies, but it still contained the germs of cohesion in the tradition of Jenghiz and the unifying force of the new religion.

Timur was the grandson of one of Jenghiz Khan's ministers, he was a strict Moslem, a warrior and a student, he dreamed of emulating the conquests of the great Khan, by years of fighting and diplomacy he re-united the old Mongolian empire, and had at his disposal almost the same forces as his predecessor. Timur flung his hordes against the world with the same ruthless fury as those who had gone before him, and the added thoroughness of a follower of the Prophet. From the banks of the Volga to Delhi and from Samarkand to the Euphrates, death, destruction and desolation were inflicted without mercy.

The Jalayrs and the principalities of the broken Empire of the Il Khans vanished like the phantoms of some broken dream. Bayazid in the midst of his victories was balancing in his mind whether he should capture Constantinople, or attack the Sultan of Egypt, when he received a peremptory summons from Timur to reinstate the Anatolian Amirs whom he had dispossessed. Bayazid did not hesitate to accept the challenge, and prepared for war.

Timur, loosing part of his forces into Syria in order to prevent any combination between Adrianople and Cairo, marched into the heart of Anatolia, destroying and massacring all that lay in his path. At Angora Bayazid marshalled his Asiatic levies, his Servian auxiliaries and Janissaries, and stood out to meet the conqueror.

Timur's army not only outnumbered that of Bayazid by about

two to one, but was able to count on the defection of a great body of the Sultan's Anatolian soldiers, who saw in the invader one who came to restore their ancient chiefs.

Bayazid had hoped to oppose to Timur the same resistance that the Egyptians had made to Kitboga, but the battle ended in disaster. Deserted by his Turks, Bayazid was captured when the last of his Servians and Janissaries, who alone had stood firm, were broken or dead.

This fatal battle seemed as it were the end of all Ottoman hopes, and after it Bayazid only lived on a captive, to see his own dominions spoiled and disposed of. Timur seemed to take a malicious pleasure in apportioning his prisoner's lands to his heirs and servants while he yet lived; the sons of Bayazid, Musa and Mohammed were respectively established as vassal Princes of Adrianople and Brusa, the old Amirs of Asia Minor were once again set up in their ancient territories, the capital cities were plundered and devastated, and when Timur at last retired into Central Asia, he left the Ottoman Empire as piteous and broken as fire, sword, conquest and disunion could make it.

Yet Timur had achieved things for the Ottomans that served them well for many of the ill turns he had done them, he had utterly destroyed the last stronghold of the Greeks in Smyrna, for Smyrna was Greek in people, open to the sea, a natural rallying point for Christians in Asia, and a very perfect meeting-place for east and west. Smyrna Timur had left a heap of crumbling ruins, and her people a pile of eyeless skulls.

On his way home Timur drove the Mamlukes from Syria; perhaps the poor stand made by the Sultans of Egypt is to be explained by the fact that during these years there was more dissension among the rulers of Cairo than usual, owing to the faction of the Bahri Mamlukes having had to give way to the Burji party, who from now to the end of the Mamluke period chose the Sultan from among themselves.

In 1405 Timur died leaving an empire which was long outlived by the ruins and devastations and famines that the building of it cost. In fact, as soon as Timur left Asia Minor his western rule ended, the Mamlukes returned to Syria, the Ak Koyunlu became independent, the Kara Koyunlu reappeared in

their old haunts, and incorporated the territories of the extinct Jalayrs in their dominions.

In the Anatolian peninsula the Turkish Princes and Amirs stood once again face to face.

Mohammed the Ottoman Prince of Brusa was one of those tolerant, courageous, far-seeing statesmen, typical of the early generations of the Ottoman house. When he received the government of Brusa from the hands of Timur, he was himself a vassal, his father a dishonoured captive, his brother was a rival, his empire broken into twelve independent principalities, his brothers divided against him.

Truly Ertoghrul had had a better start than this, but Mohammed was not afraid, he allied himself with the Emperor of Constantinople, and so defeated and slew his brother Musa, he reunited the forces of Adrianople and Brusa, and turned them on to the isolated and fractious Amirs, reducing them to submission in detail.

Mohammed the usurper ended by having re-conquered all that had been lost save Karaman, and died, leaving the prestige of the Sultan retrieved, rebellion quelled, the army reorganised, and further, a Moslem fleet sweeping the sea and challenging the Venetian sailors for its command for the first time since the days of the Omayyads.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE ADVANCE OF THE OTTOMAN TURKS

FROM the accession of Murad the situation between the Persian Gulf and the Dardanelles begins to clear once and for all.

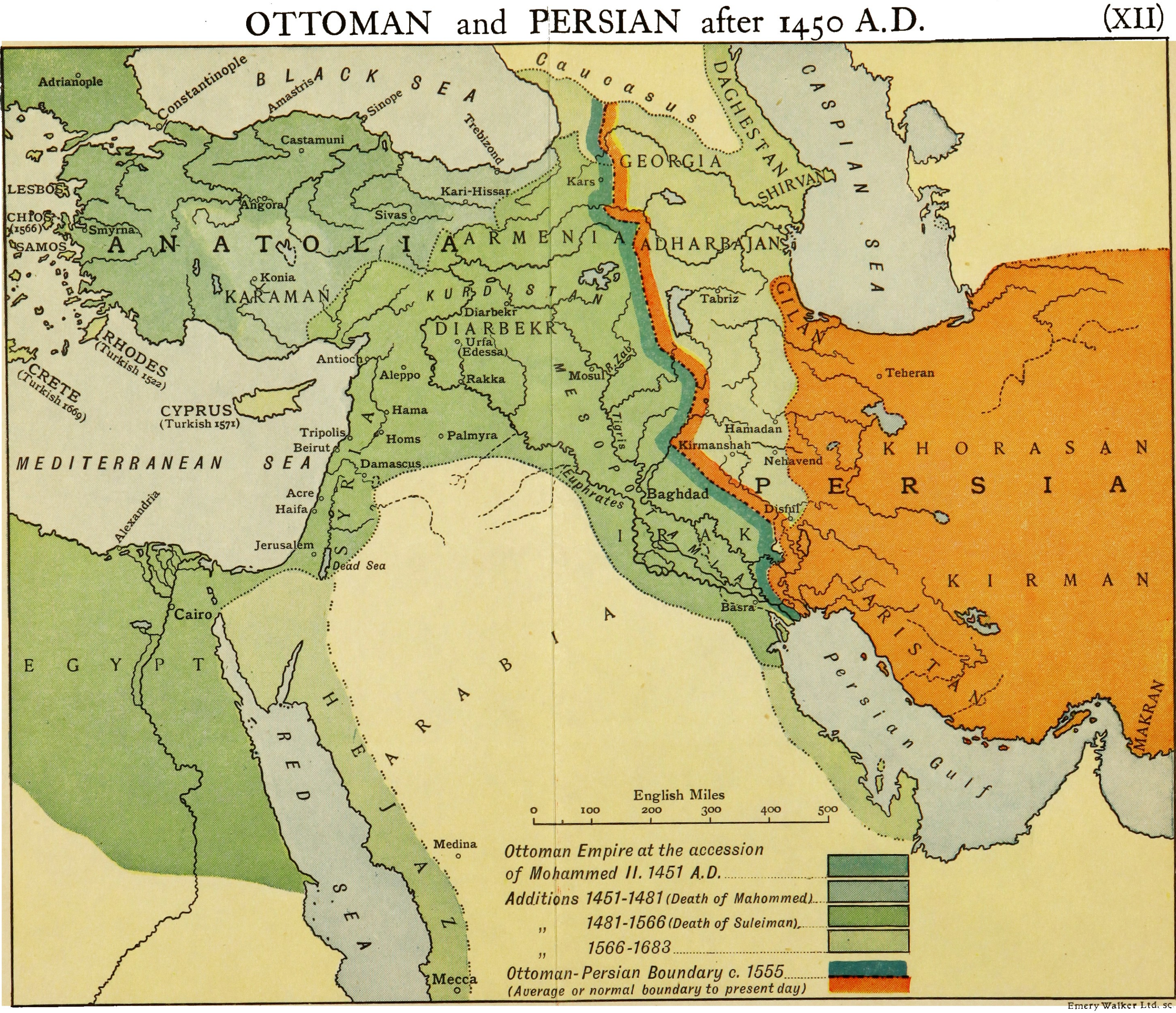
The inroad of Timur had been the last avalanche that was destined to slide off the Mongolian steppes. Henceforward Western Asia was to work out its own salvation, there were to be no more hungry pasture-seeking hordes moving from East to West, neither were there to be further pious bands of crusaders sweeping from West to East. Moreover, the desiccation of southern Mesopotamia which had shrivelled up so much of the caravan traffic between Asia and Europe was to be followed by another change of far-reaching importance.

In 1492 Columbus was to discover America; in 1499 Vasco da Gama was to round the Cape: thus drawing the whole commercial and fiscal activity of the old world from its ancient channels, stifling ancient ambitions, blocking ancient paths, and darkening ancient lights.

It is to these last two developments that we may attribute that gulf which sunders East and West until the end of the 15th century. There were ties of interest and common life as well as hostility between Europe and Asia in the Near East. It would indeed be possible to say that Turk and Byzantine allied, fought and negotiated on something of a common basis; that to an Englishman or a Frenchman of the 14th century a Turk, and a Greek, a Sultan, an Emperor, and a Pope were a part of his universe. But 100 years later the Sultan was no longer a part of that ancient world whose trade had run from

# OTTOMAN and PERSIAN after 1450 A.D.





China to Paris, whose centre was Jerusalem, whose great sea was the Mediterranean, and whose confines lay in the Indies and the Atlantic.

The Sultan of the Turks period became a part of that East which had no interest for those whose eyes were now turned entirely West and South upon a world which from a flat infinity had suddenly shrunken to a ball of quite measurable proportions whose wealth and trade at last could be harnessed to the winds and waves.

The ruling policy which formed the fortunes of our map in the 15th century, though they were profoundly influenced by these maritime factors, yet at the same time were developed in complete unconsciousness of their existence or meaning. Western Christendom on the verge of the reformation, Eastern Christendom on the verge of subjection, could neither come together nor remain in isolated unconsciousness of each other.

The Byzantine found it more easy to negotiate with the Ottoman Pasha than with the Pope. For years the Turks and Byzantines had intermarried, and hunted in couples in strange by-paths of diplomacy. The Ottoman had played the Bulgar and the Serb of Europe against the Emperor, just as the Emperor had played the Asiatic Amir against the Sultan ; the Greek and Turkish Royal Princes had mutually arranged their fathers' murders; the Emperors and Sultans had mutually agreed to hold each other's rivals as prisoners and hostages; in fact Turk and Byzantine policy had so intertwined that it is difficult to say whether the Turks regarded the Greeks as their allies, enemies, or subjects, or whether the Greeks looked upon the Turks as their tyrants, destroyers, or protectors.

Constantinople still held the prestige and name of Empires, again and again it had been within the Ottoman grasp when some freak of fortune saved it. Timur had overthrown Bayazid just as he was about to take it, then Murad in 1422 was almost on the walls when a rising in Karaman called away his forces.

From 1422 onward the Turks were lured further and further into Europe by their long wars with the Wallachs, Serbians, Albanians, and Hungarians, and seemed always postponing the final attack on Constantinople until their outlying frontiers were determined.

Meanwhile the Mamlukes in Egypt had once more consolidated their power in Syria and engaged in constant war with the Turkoman rulers of Diarbekir, Mesopotamia and Armenia, and the Amirs of Karaman and Kizil Ahmadli still maintained the complete independence which the invasion of Timur had given them.

Before the capture of Constantinople, therefore, the Ottoman possessions in Asia were comparatively insignificant in comparison with the immense territories over which they ruled in Europe itself. In fact, strange as it may appear, it was as an European Power that the Turks not only approached Constantinople itself but the greater part of Asia Minor, Armenia, and Syria.

Murad the Second died in 1421, and was succeeded by Mohammed the Second, who found that as far as Europe was concerned the Empire had reached an apparent limit, the great battle of Kossovo in 1448 had dissipated the hopes of Christendom and had also exhausted the Turkish power of advance. Constantinople, weakened by tribute, by loss of territory, by intrigue, by isolation from Europe, now only awaited the long deferred blow. It was Mohammed's luck to have thrust into his hand the opportunity of crowning all the glories of his house.

We see the city closely besieged in 1453, and after nearly two months' siege it succumbed in a confused skirmish, as often things happen in real life most undramatically. If Turkish historians are to be believed *parlementaires* were actually discussing terms of surrender, the Genoese were wondering whether they should stay or go; some of the troops were marching to their ordinary relief; citizens were following their usual avocations, when suddenly the panic-stricken folk spread the incredible news that the town was taken; that the enemy was over the walls; that the Emperor was killed; that the European ships had gone never to return; that the Empire of the Caesars was after fifteen centuries at an end.

To the Turks the capture of Constantinople was a crowning mercy and yet a fatal blow. Constantinople had, as we have seen, been the tutor and polisher of the Turks. So long as the Ottomans could draw science, learning, philosophy, art and tolerance from a living fountain of civilisation in the heart of

their dominions, so long had the Ottomans not only brute force but intellectual power. So long as the Ottoman Empire had in Constantinople a free port, a market, a centre of world finance, a pool of gold, an exchange, so long did the Ottomans never lack for money and financial support. Mohammed was a great statesman, the moment he entered Constantinople he endeavoured to stay the damage his ambition had done; he supported the patriarch, he conciliated the Greeks, he did all he could to continue Constantinople the city of the Emperors. When he took Trebizond in 1463 he passed on the Greek population to reinforce the depleted quarters of Constantinople; but the fatal step had been taken, Constantinople as the city of the Sultans was Constantinople no more; the markets died away, the culture and civilisation fled, the complex finance faded from sight; and the Turks had lost their governors and their support. On the other hand, the corruptions of Byzantium remained, the bureaucracy, the eunuchs, the palace guards, the spies, the bribers, go-betweens—all these the Ottomans took over, and all these survived in lnxuriant life. The Turks in taking Stambul let slip a treasure and gained a pestilence. The wisdom, learning, art, and philosophy fled to Europe to hasten the renaissance and elucidate the problems of the new learning, the villainous cruelty and falseness remained to distort and divert the development of the Ottoman Empire.

But to Mohammed the conqueror, and the world which knew him, these things were hidden; for a moment the Turkish Sultan stood on a pinnacle of good fortune. The news of the fall of Constantinople came as a shameful and stunning blow to all the peoples of Central Europe, to Asia and Africa, as a cause of rejoicing. Moslem fanaticism, which had sunk to so low an ebb, blazed up again; the Mamluke Sultan of Egypt rejoiced, and for a time there was a brief peace among the Moslem states.

Then again the struggle began anew. There were never wanting certain weaknesses inherent in the Ottoman Empire, which at the moments of its greatest power brought it to the apparent verge of dissolution. Mohammed the conqueror died with half Asia Minor under his sway, his capital in the Imperial city and Thrace, Wallachia, Bosnia, Macedonia, and parts of Hungary subject to his rule.

Bayazid II, who succeeded him, had to fight for his very life against his brother Prince Djem, who, desirous of dividing the Empire with Bayazid, first raised a rebellion in Karaman, then endeavoured to league the Mamluke Sultan of Egypt against the Ottoman Empire; then finally failing in all these projects gave himself as a hostage to the knights of Rhodes, and while a prisoner in Europe intrigued with every king in Christendom, including the Pope, in hopes that a crusade would serve his turn in humiliating his brother the Sultan.

Prince Djem died in Italy without having achieved any of his objects, but his policy is sufficient to give some idea of the instability of the Ottoman Empire even at its apogee. Indeed to a modern mind the selfishness and destructiveness of Djem's purpose, the success of which must have entailed the ruin of the Ottoman race, is almost incredible, and yet as none of his contemporaries regard Djem save in the light of a fatal and tragic young man of endearing disposition, it serves to explain how inevitable and (in the interests of settled government) how necessary were the frequent murders of the more intelligent and attractive male heirs of any particular generation of the Ottoman Imperial house.

Save to quell rebellions, the Ottomans after the capture of Constantinople ceased for a time to look eastward for new conquests; the turbulent state of Karaman deriving as it did help from Egypt served to prevent the Turks undertaking expeditions beyond the Taürus, yet neither the Amirs of Karaman nor the Sultans of Egypt ever seriously menaced the Ottomans, owing to the continual wars between the Mamlukes and the Ak Koyunlu Turks who were the rulers of Eastern Persia, Armenia, and Mesopotamia. This tribe, under the able leadership of Uzun Hassan, had engrossed an empire which at one time extended from Batum to the Persian Gulf and from Erzinjan to Tabriz, a vast territory rich in troops and gold. Uzun Hassan endeavoured to protect and prolong the separate existence of Trebizond and entered into an alliance with Venice against the Ottomans, but the policy was too much obscured by distance and want of cohesion.

When Uzun Hassan died his Empire fell, as Persian governments do, into a state of complete anarchy. The Ak Koyunlu

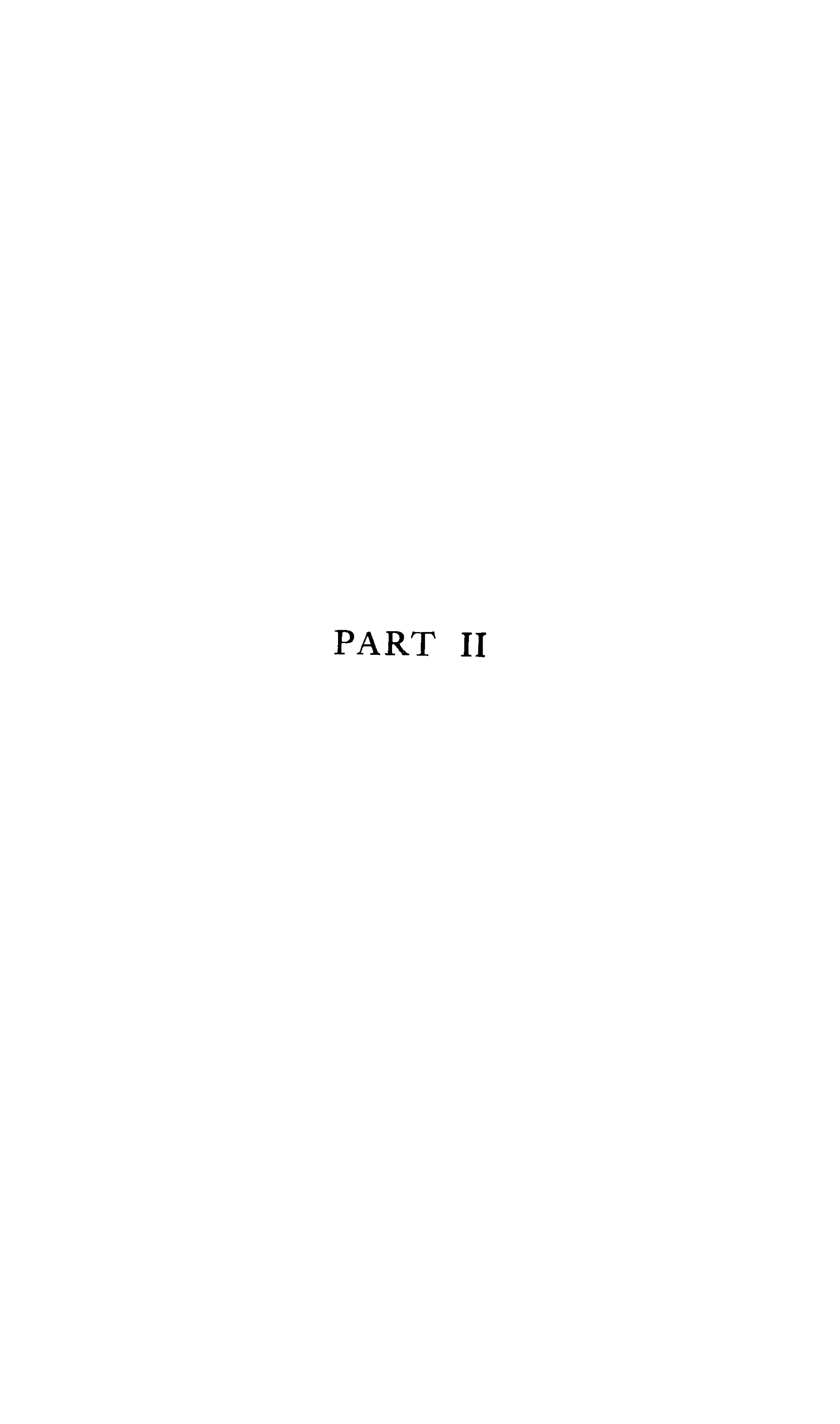
tribe, torn by dissensions, vanished from the map. The disappearance of the Ak Koyunlu power in 1481 almost synchronises with the final conquest and absorption by the Ottomans of the district of Karaman, so long a thorn in the Asiatic side of the Sultan's dominions, so that by the end of the 15th century little or nothing stood between the Ottomans and the Mamlukes, while all to the eastward were chaos and disorganisation.

It was now that there arose one of those unexpected developments which ever teach students the vanity of historical prescience and prophecy. For no obvious reason we suddenly find ourselves confronted with a tremendous national and religious revival in Persia. The last great movement of this kind dates back to the days of the Abbasids, and yet in 1499, when one would have supposed no one cared a jot for Ali, Imams, or any such refinements, there arose one Ismail the son of a warrior saint of sacred lineage, who by preaching a mystic creed suddenly aroused Persia from end to end, and established a native dynasty which appealed to all who disliked orthodoxy and Turkish dominion. The power of Ismail extended from Herat to Diarbekir, he was solicited by Venetians, Italians, and Central European Princes who saw in him at last a possible ally to check the onward march of the Ottomans by well-planned attacks in rear. Further, Ismail, unlike the Ak Koyunlu, was not the enemy of the Mamlukes of Egypt, for they also perceived that they were no longer threatened from the East, but by the rapid encroachments of the power of Constantinople.

By 1512, when Selim succeeded Bayazid II, the situation was clear enough. Sufi doctrine and Shia mysticism were spreading through Asia Minor wherever there was non-Ottoman Moslem stock; the dervishes who had so increased in numbers and varieties were passing from mosque to mosque along the highroads all kinds of unorthodox interpretations and speculations; the Mamlukes were hand-in-glove with Ismail the Persian King of Kings; Sunnism was threatened, the Ottoman Empire was in peril. Sultan Selim, a man of ruthless cruelty and rare energy, tackled the situation with spirit, he massacred every unorthodox Moslem of importance in his own dominion, forced his way through Armenia (which he annexed) at the head of his troops,

and in spite of mutiny in his own ranks led them to Azerbaijan, where he smashed the forces of Ismail, turned on his tracks and annexed Diarbekir, Jazirah, and northern Irak, then doubled back in Syria and attacked the Mamlukes, driving them straight away into Egypt. He brought their dynasty to an end, appropriated their territories, and finding the Abbasid Caliph cowering in Cairo, he bought the title, robe and office from him for his heirs and successors. Thus between 1514 and 1517 Selim added to his Asiatic territories the whole of what is now known as Turkey-in-Asia. He had found the frontiers at Sivas and Adana, he carried them to Assuan, Aden, Mosul, and Ararat ; he comprised in his domains the holy cities of Christendom and Islam, and moreover he added to the titles of Chief Prince and Emperor those of Commander of the Faithful and Vicar of God on earth.

Seventeen years later Selim's successor, Sulaiman the Magnificent, conquered Baghdad and completed the eastward march of the Ottoman Empire.



# PART II

# PART II

## INTRODUCTION

HAVING completed my historical notes I now venture to lay before the reader my diaries, describing the five journeys I made in 1906, 1907, 1908, 1910, and 1913 respectively.

I have left them as they were written on the spot, and as it will be observed at very different dates. I have not endeavoured to bring them into closer correspondence than they naturally bear to one another, and allowances must be made for modifications of opinions in the light of the extraordinary events which took place in the Ottoman Empire during the years in which the narratives were being written.

During the whole of these journeys I was accompanied by my dragoman Jacob-el-Arab, a Latin Christian of Jerusalem, for whose devotion, courage and steadfastness I cannot give too great praise. He was charged with the whole of the management of the servants, animals and camp, and the fact that he so rarely intrudes upon the following pages is only due to his ubiquitous capacity. We mobilised at Aleppo for the campaign on the 18th March, Jacob, my English servant, Joseph Finch, Dimitri the cook (a Greek), and five Syrian muleteers, and myself. The strategy of travel I pursued in this and in the subsequent journey, was to follow my nose over those portions of the map which were the whitest or most rich in notes of interrogation and dotted lines.

## CHAPTER I

### THE JAZIRAH

ALEPPO is now a city which presents not a few points of interest to the student of modern Asiatic Turkey. When I visited it first, eight years ago, it was a typical North Syrian town. Dirt and disease reigned in its crowded and crumbling bazaars ; decay and poverty were the most notable characteristics of its buildings. The ruinous modern houses clung for support to the ancient and more solid edifices, and the few antique carvings and inscriptions which were to be seen on the walls and mosques only served to show that the present was a period of depression and decline. By their unfinished condition and pretentious appearance the government buildings gave a gloomy impression of an ambitious and ill-considered expenditure. The half-starved soldiers who slouched about casting hungry glances towards the bakers' counters, the arid, uncultivated fields lying at the very city gates, the half-built bridges, the ruined streets, and the savage and stupid fanaticism of the Moslems, composed a picture of want, ignorance, and decadence which was thrown into relief by the few houses of the "Frank" merchants and consuls.

In 1906, however, Haleb presents a very different appearance. The old town is indeed much as it was, but many of the bazaars have been rebuilt, the streets have been repaired, and work and business are steadily increasing. Beyond the walls, houses of great beauty and originality are springing up in every direction—indeed many of the brakes and gardens which once surrounded the place have vanished and have been replaced by whole new quarters of the growing city. What is the more

pleasing is that these new houses and streets are of no mean artistic merit, being neither slavish, unthinking copies of the works of the past nor apish mimicries of the dull ugliness of modern Europe. The Renaissance designs of the modern Latin architect have been appropriated, and iron girders have been made use of; but the artistic spirit of Syria—flamboyant, nay, perhaps a little vulgar if you will—remains. The dividers, T-square, and drawing-board of the French engineer have been unable to crush out the originality of the illiterate Syrian Arab. The native mason grasped the fact that classic forms and Saracen intricacy might be made to blend, and he seized the new basis of design and moulded from it the creatures of his imagination. Iron girders, he saw, were of use to support balconies; unashamed, therefore, he thrust them into his walls, and at Haleb one realises for the first time that when an iron girder is left with its rivets and its natural colour, and not painted to represent a granite block or an oaken beam, it is a natural and logical support which need not offend the eye of the most fastidious observer.

The new buildings filled me with such interest that I took the pains to make the acquaintance of some of their architects, whom I found to be master-masons of both Christian and Moslem Aleppine birth. It is true that they could neither read nor write, and most of them (even perhaps as the builders of Westminster Abbey, and unlike the contrivers of the South Kensington Museum) could not draw an elevation to save their lives; but they were artists through and through. With mingled pride and diffidence they showed me their rough plans and beautifully finished works, and told me how it was that they settled the tracery and ornamentation, how they made the decoration conform to that of the surrounding buildings and yet kept it a little different, and how they never repeated a design completely, because it was easier to make something fresh. As to their education, were they not the sons of masons and of masons' sons; had they not run to and fro with mud and pebbles on their backs in infancy; had they not risen from child to boy, and boy to stone-carrier, and carrier to carver, and carver to mason, and mason to builder? What indeed should they have to learn from books? "Frank" engineers truly had

shown them pictures, and they had made something like them but a little different, for the " Frank " fashions were good, better indeed than their own.

As I looked at one of these builders, I was filled with amazement—here was the East settling its own social questions after its own fashion. The man was a fresh-coloured, fair-haired Christian; he had under him a band of 80 or 100 workmen, each paid according to his degree; he was designer, architect, contractor, and builder; he estimated his profits at £150 per annum; his best workmen received 15 piastres (*2s. 6d.*) per day, his boys and children 5 piastres (*10d.*); his men he engaged according to agreement, and he said that once an agreement was made, a man never went back upon it. As I looked at him sitting on a low stool drinking a cup of coffee with one of his own labourers and the landlord of the house under construction, I thought of Labour Members bellowing their own merits to their constituents, of millionaires in their houses in Park Lane, of night schools and strikes, and wondered how it was that the West had weaved such a wonderfully complex web of questions, troubles and misery out of the same materials from which my master-builder was earning his just and peaceful livelihood.

It is not only in matters of architecture and general appearance that the city of Haleb has improved. Wealth, business, movement, and traffic have increased beyond all expectation, and the progress in every direction may, I think, be attributed to one cause—the general revival of agriculture in the plains to the east of the city. Twenty-eight years ago Mr. Wilfrid Blunt found to his great satisfaction that this region was an almost empty desert, containing a few miserable villages inhabited by degraded Arabs who, although they had abandoned their tents, still followed a pastoral life and barely cultivated the soil. In the summer the Bedawin roamed at will over the plains, which were dotted with the remains of deserted or ruined villages; in the winter the region was a wretched wilderness. Now the situation has entirely changed. Since the Bedawin first took to living in settled districts, a mixed population of Kurds, Arabs, and Turkish people has been pouring into the country from Aintab, from Alexandretta, and from the direction of Urfa. Practical and intelligent Circassians have driven away

the useless desert-men, and have replaced them by a sturdy peasantry.

On the way from Haleb to Meskene, as far as the eye can see, there stretches a glorious tract of corn-bearing land, spotted with brown mud villages, containing a mixed race of people who reply equally readily in Turkish, Kurdish, or Arabic to the questions put by the passing traveller. Many of these villages are the property of wealthy citizens of Haleb whose influence is sufficient to obtain protection for their tenants from the Government. The cultivation is not elaborate, but the ground is fairly tilled, and the continual influx of industrious peoples is steadily regenerating the land. The prospect of a multitude of villages growing up in a country which once before supported a great and wealthy population, is more than pleasing to the eye. It gives hope and heart to anyone accustomed to the lugubrious croakings at Constantinople, and fills one with pleasant and cheerful expectancy, for to the east of Haleb there is in the making a magnificent race of people. The intelligent Arabs and the manly Kurds have seemingly all the merits of their respective parents, and the young people of the first generation seemed to me handsome and well built in body, kind of heart, and industrious by nature. At present the reclamation only extends within an hour of Meskene; but as the most easterly villages were only built last year, there is every hope that within a short time the river banks themselves will be populated.

Beyond the Euphrates lies the Jazirah, those plains of northern Mesopotamia where dwell the great Kurdish and Arab tribes of shepherds, and the devil worshippers of the Sinjar. Once this vast undulating expanse was dotted with wealthy cities; the banks of the Khabur, the Jagjag, the Tartar, and the Belikh rivers were lined with villages, vast canals distributed their waters miles out into the broad rolling plains, an unrivalled agriculture supported a vast population; while the highways were covered with a continuous procession of caravans westward and eastward bound.

Whether one consults classical or Arabian geographers, the tale is the same; in the time of Caesar, Julian, or the Caliph Mansur, the descriptions of this region are identical: wealthy shrines, vast agricultural cities, much trade, hosts of wealthy

shepherds, and a complicated but efficient system of irrigation were the salient characteristics. Now, a few broken mounds, an isolated police post or two, are all that is left of that settled population. All save the shepherds have gone; the land is abandoned to the nomads, their flocks and pastoral warfare. A new population has drifted into the vacant land—nomad Kurds from the highlands, Bedawin from the Arabian deserts; the first pushed south by the armies of Selim the Conqueror (1566), the second driven north by famine. Between them, these Kurds and Bedawin have made the Jazirah the merriest and most entertaining little kingdom of disorder. Towns, sedentary commerce, organised government, and the rest of the conventional bores of the Universe have in turn been successfully disposed of, and their places taken by encampments, flocks, and patriarchal traditions, amid which the children of nature amuse themselves in the freest possible manner.

In March and April, north, south, east, and west—all Jazirah—is at war, not because the people are bloodily minded, not because they are rapacious, not because they are savage; but because it is such fun. In the spring of the year, when the grass is rich, the camels sleek, the sheep fat, the horses swift, what better sport is there than a foray into your neighbour's pastures?—a twenty hours' ride, a wild swoop on some unguarded herds of camels, and a vainglorious homeward flight, or perhaps a thirty-mile battle over hill and dale, with 500 young bloods aside; yelling, whooping, brandishing lances, firing from the saddle, tumbling over neck and crop in the dust when a horse misses its footing, surrendering or fleeing when the action becomes too close? Now and again a man is killed, it is true; but that is a rare event which adds the necessary spice of danger to the glorious pastime of desert battle. Then, think of all that depends on these wars: of the heroes like El Hadhi, the young Shaykh of the Bedawin, who chased thirty enemies alone, sword in hand—and at the end died of a base-born shepherd's goad; the great chiefs like the Kurd Ibrahim, who is now master of 14,000 horse, and whose grandfather was hanged in Diarbekir; the poets who pass from camp to camp singing the ballads of victory, the laments of disaster, and the dirges for the fallen; of the great councils of war, when the greybeards

wag round the fire, plans of campaign are discussed, alliances are made and oaths of friendship and brotherhood are taken; of the shrill cries of the women when the horsemen peer over the skyline; of the gatherings of the warriors when a raid is projected; of the midnight marches and noontide battles—these things are the very salt of a life which knows nothing of old age pensions, Nonconformist consciences, suffragettes, maffickings, professional politicians, trusts, excursions, halfpenny papers, hysteria, and appendicitis.

When you go into the Jazirah it is essential to divest yourself of all preconceived notions. Wipe John Stuart Mill, Omar Khayyam, Burke, Ruskin, Carlyle, and Bernard Shaw out of your mind; learn the Book of Job by heart for philosophy, the Book of Judges for politics, the "Arabian Nights" (Burton's translation) for ethics; ride by balance, not by grip, keep your girths loose, look out for rat-holes, be polite and dignified in your conversation, *don't* talk about the superiority of the European civilisation, and you will learn a good deal. If you adopt any other line of conduct you will very likely get into serious trouble.

On April 1 my journey began in real earnest. At six o'clock we left the barracks at Meskene; and started off to be ferried across the Euphrates, the impedimenta having been despatched to Rakka by the right bank. The ferry was a rather more practical affair than usual, and was in charge of a reverend and turbaned Turk from Anatolia—though what he was doing on the banks of the Euphrates it was hard to tell. The horses were shipped and we were pushed off into the yellow flood; and although, as I have said, the ferry-boat was less terrifying than most in this part of the world, I must admit that I felt some qualms when we grounded heavily in midstream. The three boatmen screamed to Heaven for safety, whilst the Turkish captain cursed them until he was hoarse; but presently the swirling current swept us off into the stream once more, and we twirled and turned giddily in the oily, blistering waters until we were driven ashore and were able to disembark.

On landing, we were directed to the tents of the Shaykh Naif of the Weldi Arabs, whose camp lay about four miles

to the south. The Weldi are a poor tribe who possess no camels or horses, and consequently have to depend on donkeys for the transport of their tents and household goods. We found Shaykh Naif a pleasant, but rather bird-like old gentleman, brooding over his coffee-pots in company with about twenty oldsters of his own age. He came out of his ragged tent to receive us, and after we had been entertained with the customary coffee with butter and sour milk, we asked him who would guide us across the waste to Tell-es-Semen. This question provoked a long and painful discussion. The Shaykh stated that the best road was by Rakka, and it took us half an hour to convince him that we particularly wished to avoid going to Rakka, as that route was well known. To this he answered that there was no other road except directly across the desert, where there was no water, food, or inhabitants. This statement provoked his aged companions to contradictious laughter.

"By God," cried one toothless patriarch, "there is water cold as snow and sweet as milk, in such numberless wells that men may not ride at night for fear of falling into them; there are tents in such quantities that the ground is black with them; there are Anazeh, Milli, Weldi, Baggara, Aghedaat and all the tribes of the Jazirah gathered together; straight as a lance is the road and as smooth as a table."

We naturally asked whether no one would at least direct us along this road; whereat another, even older than the first, came forward brandishing a little stick.

"Look you," he croaked, "were I twenty years younger and had I a mare of my own, I would ride with you to the end of the world; but I am old and mareless, as you see. However I will direct you in such a way that you cannot miss the road if you can but find it. Now see, here is a *tell* (hillock), a little *tell*; behind it after about four hours' ride at a canter you will see a ruin; now that ruin lies to the left of the road behind the second *tell*, but as for that *tell* you cannot see it, for it lies below the range of hills to the right of Ain-el-Isa, a spring of good water in winter indeed, but heavy for a weak stomach; but, as I said, you cannot go astray if you do but ride along the range of hills which stand a little to the right of the first *tell* beyond the little *tell* I have spoken of; and that *tell* is but

fifteen hours as a camel walks from here to the fields near the spot you are going to, so far as I can judge."

This lucid explanation did not fill us with the confidence it was intended to convey, and Shaykh Naif took no small pleasure in wagging his head and prophesying disaster and misfortune if we attempted the journey alone. The sergeant of our escort, a brisk young murderer[1] who had reformed on promotion, proposed visiting the neighbouring camps to find a guide, and set out on his search about 9 o'clock. The morning I spent in Shaykh Naif's tent, whence we had a view of the early procession of women and children marching out to dig in the fields for liquorice, while their lords and masters dozed among the flocks on the hillsides and the elders gossiped round the coffee pots with Shaykh Naif. Bedawi women have most of the hard work to do, and their lives are short and laborious; but I understand that many a matron of Constantinople would forgo her rouge, her French governess, her brougham, and her *caique* for one tithe of the freedom of her desert sisters.

During the course of the morning, I took the opportunity of inquiring into the state of the Jazirah. Local wars were very plentiful, but no one had been killed; one man, indeed, had had a bullet through his *abba* cloak and a mare had been shot in the haunch, but otherwise no one between the Khabur and the Euphrates had been hurt. Ibrahim Pasha was duly cursed for his wickedness, and the Berazieh were reported to be hatching tremendous plots against him; but of bloodshed there was none. I asked if the fighting was more severe than in former days, and one of the ancients sitting near Shaykh Naif said that it was much less severe for the following reason—twenty years ago, no one carried anything but the lance, and in fighting at close quarters men were often wounded and sometimes killed; while now that nearly every man had a Martini, folk were afraid to push matters to an issue and even fled before firing a shot.

The day rolled on and no guide put in an appearance to lead us to Tell-es-Semen, until late in the evening the sergeant returned with a man who had once been a comrade of his in his unregenerate days. The man, whose name was Khalaf, being a

[1] He was an ex-thief, who had deserted from the army, murdered a man, been sentenced to 100 years' imprisonment, and let out on probation.

noted thief was well acquainted with the roads, and guaranteed to lead us to Tell-es-Semen in two days. He showed a little coyness, however, at going there, and after some excuses announced that a little while before he had paid a visit in that direction in the character of a sheep-stealer and might perhaps be recognised ; still, as he loved us all, he would risk it.

Then came the serious question of payment for his services and he began the bargaining with the following speech :—" Bear witness the Prophet, by God, with God and through God, I desire to accompany you for nothing. I repel and abhor the notion of accepting any payment for such a paltry service—not indeed a service, but a duty. However, this matter of going to Tell-es-Semen comes at an awkward time, for I was about to proceed to Haleb to make a complaint against the Ghess Arabs who have robbed me. Accordingly, this journey will, if I take it, cause me to lose some £T10 ; as a compensation I require £T4, for indeed the pleasure of your company will amply repay me for the loss of the other £T6."

This striking statement was received by the whole assembly in profound silence. I then suggested that two francs per diem was a ridiculously high price, but that in consideration of the lineage and noted capacity of the Shaykh Khalaf we would be prepared to pay him such a sum.

Khalaf replied that the pang of parting with us was a wrench which tore the uttermost cords of his liver, and left the tent.

The sergeant followed him, and for one hour the two sat on the ground talking ; then Jacob joined them and another hour passed, after which the three returned to the Shaykh's tent, where I was sitting. Khalaf had moderated his demands to six francs a day, but at that sum he stood firm, swearing that he would not abate one jot or tittle of his request. Judging the moment favourable, I rose two francs. Khalaf glared at me across the fire, rage and indignation on his brow ; then one by one the old Shaykhs patted him on the back and bade him accept the money ; a Christian merchant slapped his hands together in despair that such a splendid sum should be let slip by his friend Shaykh Khalaf ; Khalaf looked at me again through the smoke ; I winked at him, and he smiled and then gave way.

The next morning we set out into the desert—or rather prairie; for that cannot be called a desert which the slightest scratch is sufficient to cultivate, and where the pasture is green for three months in the year. The lands of the Jazirah differ, indeed, from any other rolling stretches of country I have ever seen, and bear not the faintest resemblance to either the Texan and Mexican plains or the South African veldt. The atmosphere, which is at once clear and hazy, produces a very curious optical illusion, so that a stone eight hundred yards away appears to be close at hand, while a mountain on the horizon which is not more than six miles off appears to be treble the distance. The two effects combined give an impression of vastness and space which it is difficult to describe in words. The sky, which in spring is often cloudy and overcast, throws strange streaky shadows over the landscape, and a dull indefinite line of grey on the horizon will change suddenly to a clear bright ridge of yellow hills, which is equally quickly transmuted to a dark, forbidding range of purple mountains. The *wadis* form trailing serpents of olive grass and brilliant flowers, and the rolling steppes run in lines of grey and green, thus marking the good grazing land from the stony tracts. On the skyline herds of camels move almost imperceptibly to and fro cropping the grass; on the hillsides dappled flocks of sheep speckle the country with splashes of black and brown and yellow; while in the air the larks sing cheerily. Now and again a rare thunderstorm comes rushing across the land—a dark curtain of black from which the huge falling drops smite the dusty ground; the hills and distant plains vanish; the horizon closes in; the ground turns yellow and red; the brilliant lightning sends a strange unearthly sheen upon the grass; and for ten minutes we are in a strange unknown world of rushing waters, roaring wind, and rolling thunder. Then the storm passes over, the camels and sheep begin to move again, the larks are once more in voice, and, save for a little brightness in the sky, the desert is as it was before.

It was through such land as this that we rode from M'rabeyt towards Tell-es-Semen. Khalaf's knowledge of the landmarks had been by no means exaggerated; there was not a hill or *wadi* that he did not know, nor a track or bush that he could not name. About midday we came to an encampment of

Anazeh Arabs, and poor, dirty, ugly and proud we found them. Not a word of welcome was given us when we sat down. We asked for milk, and this brought forth a torrent of raucous boasting: "We are Arabs, we give milk without asking. You think we are miserable fellahin who buy and sell, you are new-comers to the desert. We have no town traders here, we are Anazeh. Whoever comes to our tents receives his fill without payment. We give, but we do not accept. We are Arabs of the desert, not traders or hucksters"—and a great deal more besides to the same effect. At last a cup of sour milk was brought with more self-praise from the donors: "Here is milk, look you, and no money expected either. Take your fill and stay a day or a month, all is one to us, our tents are open to all." When we rose to go, however, hungry clamours for payment were raised: "We are poor men, not rich fellahin who can give more than enough." In reply we gave them a copper and told them to be ashamed of themselves, and left them boasting and swearing as before.

While we had been with them, they had been good enough to give us an incredible amount of false information regarding the camping-grounds of the neighbouring Arabs. The result was that we rode on from one deserted camping-ground to another in the vain hope of making some shelter before nightfall, but alas! those Anazeh had lied. Nor camel, nor sheep, nor solitary soul did we meet, and at last, at dusk, we gave up the quest as hopeless. A puddle of water served as refreshment to our jaded animals, and for ourselves a damp *wadi* afforded a little shelter. As the sun sank in a leaden sky, the wind rose and the rain began to fall. There are certain people who enjoy a night bivouac, but I am not one of them, for it is an entertainment which only conjures up to me visions of the miseries of the small hours—an aching hip-bone, whose pains the most skilful burrowing will not alleviate; a penetrating dew, a trickle of water down one's neck, a stiffness in every joint, sore and blistered eyes, a red and swollen face, and a weary feeling of unwashed chilliness that only a hot bath and a night under cover will dispel.

Morning dawned on a wretched group of sodden and surly men, who emerged from the *wadi* Kurd Dushan, and clambering

on their shivering horses, rode mournfully in the direction of Tell-es-Semen. About an hour and a half later we came upon a large encampment, which we were told was that of Shaykh Saleh of Harran. We rode to his tent, and found therein an old man of almost wolf-like expression and thinness. He arose to greet us—a strange gaunt figure in a long quilted dressing-gown, with a ragged green turban bound round his head. He clapped me on the back merrily enough, however, and hustled me eagerly to his fire. He ground his few remaining teeth when he heard of the trick the Anazeh had played on us, and bewailed our lot in having to sleep out almost within hail of his tents.

I was a little puzzled to find this strangely habited person a Shaykh of nomad Arabs, whose fashion in dress is almost as rigorously unanimous as that of a religious confraternity. This was explained by the fact that Shaykh Saleh is head of a holy family whose duty it is to tend the fountain of Abraham and its mosque. As a healer and as a pious man, Shaykh Saleh has a great reputation. He has attained to such merit that he can eat live charcoal, and is reported, on one occasion of exaltation, to have fired a Martini into his vitals without receiving any hurt. He is a thing apart from other Bedawin; his flocks are sacred, and cannot be touched by the *ghazu*[1]; his influence among the local tribesmen is great, and his blessings are as eagerly sought after as his curses are dreaded. I ventured to ask him how it came about that he had charge of the fountain of Abraham, and his account was interesting, as it shows that there is a connection between the two shrines of Ain-el-Arus and Hebron. Shaykh Saleh's account was as follows:—

"There was a certain holy family who had charge of the fountain of Abraham since the days when the saint walked on earth. Three generations ago this family was reduced to one Shaykh, who lived alone with his tribe without marrying. On a certain day, a man came on foot into his tent, and the Shaykh arose and spoke as follows:—'You have come from Hebron, as it was ordained from the beginning. You are of such a family, and this is your tribe. Take charge, therefore, of this shrine, marry, and beget children who shall tend the shrine after your death, and the wolf will obey you.'

[1] Raiding party.

"'What wolf?' asked the stranger.

"The old Shaykh called up a great grey wolf, and said: 'This is my shepherd, and in the morning he takes out the sheep to pasture, and at night brings them in.'

"'But,' said the stranger, 'does he not devour the sheep?'

"'No,' answered the Shaykh; 'and when a guest comes, you have but to say, Bring a sheep, and he brings it.'

"So the stranger took charge of the shrine, and tended the mosque and the spring, and the wolf tended the sheep; but as for the old Shaykh, he went away no one knew whither.

"Now that stranger from Hebron was my great-grandfather, and I am his successor. Now look you, I have no wolf to tend my flocks"—here he paused, and gazed round the assembly, his eyes brightening with rage—"no wolves to guard my flocks, but a wolf of a *dowlah* (government) to gather taxes. My family is holy, I am here to entertain guests, here to tend a mosque falling into ruins, and they tax me so that I sit in rags and my people starve. Bread, sugar, and butter is all I have to give to a Baik (Bey) when he comes to my door"—and the tears rolled down the old man's cheeks. "Tell the Sultan," he continued, "that I have been stripped and fleeced against the law, and beyond custom. Tell the Sultan that."

So saying, he sprang up, and wetting his finger with his tongue, ran it round my neck, and blew upon me. "Now you have my blessing, you are one of us," he continued. "Go tell the Sultan that the shrine of Abraham is falling into disrepair through illegal taxation."

When I saw the old man's emotion and excitement, I could think of nothing so much as the impotent indignation of Lear in the second act—"What! twenty of my followers at a clap!"

While we were talking, three ill-conditioned Anazeh lads, armed with lances, rode in to partake of hospitality. They said they had been out to raid the Shammar beyond the Belikh, but had taken nothing, as the water had been too high to permit of their crossing. Shaykh Saleh neither commended nor blamed them, but said, indeed, that these *ghazus* were but poor games for the fellahin, whose business it was to cultivate the ground when possible.

After a little further conversation, we left the old man and continued our march to Tell-es-Semen. Three more hours brought us to Göl Bashi. Göl Bashi—or rather El Guela, as it is called—is in spring a very large lake and swamp, connected with the Belikh by a backwater, which appears to have been artificial. The lake itself was an ancient reservoir, the water being kept in by a gigantic dam some twenty feet high. From this dam an artificial canal led off, and, as far as I could make out, connected Tell-es-Semen with Rakka, as a ridge of mounds runs the whole of the distance between those two places. The whole of El Guela is one mass of waterfowl of every description —teal, wild duck, flamingoes, wild geese, pelicans, cormorants, and four or five other kinds which were unknown to me. To lie on the bank and watch these birds, with nothing but a Männlicher rifle, was a grievous punishment which I bore with an ill grace.

From El Guela we travelled across a plain of surpassing flatness to Tell-es-Semen, where we found the Shaykh Khalaf of the local fellahin tribe in his tent. Shaykh Khalaf is a man of intellectual appearance, and his company is to be sought after. He has had the intelligence to submit to Ibrahim Pasha, whom he loathes, and does his best to cultivate the land. He told me that the *ghazus* of the Anazeh and the Shammar were making work almost impossible, and that, greatly against his will, he was being forced to take to herdmanship. He told me that it aggravated him more than he could say to see his land, which would bear any crop he could put on it, lying idle owing to the stupid selfishness of the shepherd tribes, for whose silly quarrels he had a hearty contempt. "What is this fighting about? A few camels. The banks of the Belikh would bear a million people, and yet they would be wealthy!"

I asked him directly whether agricultural operations were rapidly decreasing on the Belikh. His answer was as follows:—

"After the death of Harun-al-Rashid, a certain Caliph ruled the country, and two owls dwelt in this neighbourhood. Now the youngest owl fell in love with the daughter of the other, so he approached his senior, and begged of him his daughter in marriage. Quoth the old owl: 'My daughter is accustomed to live in great comfort. Have you a deserted village wherein to

entertain her, and another with which to endow her?' Now the young owl was pleased when he heard this, and raising his claw to his forehead, replied 'O Owl, at present I have only 80 ruined villages in my domain, but if God wills that our lord the Caliph remain of his present way of thinking much longer, I shall be the sole possessor of all the villages between here and Baghdad.'"

News came in later that forty tents had been filched from Ibrahim Pasha, and that he had himself gone in pursuit of the robbers. Quoth Shaykh Khalaf: "Those who make others weep, must weep themselves sometimes."

I taxed Shaykh Khalaf with the fact that by all accounts things were better than they were thirty years ago. To this he agreed, but added that that was no excuse for the present wretched state of affairs. "Our eyes have been opened," he remarked. "We know what we could do if we were allowed. Cotton, rice, barley, tobacco will grow here. Our eyes are open, but our hands are short."

Next morning I was aroused at dawn by Shaykh Khalaf singing hymns with a company of his tribesmen. It appears that in the vicinity of Harran the people are all extremely religious. Prayers are said regularly, and a number of holy men wander from camp to camp, holding what practically amounts to "prayer-meetings." Most of these are members of the Rufai confraternity, and give exhibitions of their immunity from pain, such as eating charcoal, running themselves through with poignards and even lances, while others are reported to leap from minarets and high rocks. The tales that are told of these men are of interest, as they throw light on the local ideas of "white magic." Shaykh Saleh-ibn-Abdul-Kadr, who died at Rakka some twenty years ago, is said to have at times transformed himself into a gazelle and in that shape travelled across the desert, while on other occasions he sailed on the Euphrates on his *abba* cloak. Although the community is so religious, I think one may safely say that fanaticism is unknown, and both Christians and Jews are regarded with neither contempt nor aversion.

From Tell-es-Semen we proceeded to Rakka by the most direct road. All along the line of march there were distinct

traces of ancient irrigation canals, which ought to be carefully surveyed. The town of Rakka has grown considerably in size and importance, and is used as a depôt by the local tribes, who are beginning to trade more freely in butter and wool since Ibrahim Pasha showed the way to wealth by sending his butter in skins to Constantinople.

After a day's stay in Rakka we set out to cross the Belikh. This was an operation which entailed some trouble, as the river, though small, is deep and difficult to ford. The Afadli Arabs have, however, made a sort of bridge of twigs and branches bound together in fascines at El Hamra, near the junction with the Euphrates.

Before crossing the river we were entertained by Shaykh Darwish of the Afadli, who is also a holy man, and guardian of the tomb of Abu Abdul Kadr. He said that he was never attacked by *ghazus*, as he was at peace with all men, and they did not interfere with his mares or flocks. We subsequently crossed the river and ascended the line of bluffs which overlook the Euphrates. Hardly had we done so than shrill cries and yells attracted our attention to the left, where, amidst a cloud of dust, we could discern poor Shaykh Darwish's mares being driven off by a band of horsemen, who turned out to be Anazeh. I longed to send a bullet skimming over to them ; but as I did not know whether the mares might not originally have been stolen from the raiders, I refrained. No attempt was made at a rescue, as apparently the theft had taken everyone by surprise. My escort of three mule-mounted soldiers were very much annoyed at my not allowing them to go in pursuit of the *ghazu*, as one of them naïvely explained that if they could only recapture the mares, Shaykh Darwish would be obliged to give them a lira (£T1 or 18*s*.) apiece. They admitted, however, that he would probably get them back for about half that sum.

We camped for the night a little way up the Belikh, amidst magnificent crops of barley. The whole of the valley of the Belikh is irrigated naturally by a number of small branches of the river, which run off from the main stream and rejoin it lower, thus cutting the flat cornlands into a number of islands. The valley varies in breadth from about one to three miles, and although but little cultivated at present, it would certainly be

one of the most productive tracts in the Ottoman Empire, if it were only inhabited. The numerous ruins along its banks show that a very large population must at one time have subsisted on both sides of the river, and when I rode for three-quarters of an hour through a mass of broken mounds, indicating the remains of some great city,[1] I began to think that Shaykh Khalaf's estimate of a possible population of a million inhabitants was not much exaggerated. That this region stands ready for the hand of the cultivator, and that the population are willing to work, should have a material effect on the prospects of the Baghdad Railway. A tremendous development cannot fail to take place the moment the main line reaches the vicinity of Harran, and the fact that the whole bank of the Belikh is open to wheeled traffic makes the building of a branch line to Rakka unnecessary until the whole valley is thickly populated.

The second day's ride brought us to a spot which bears the singular name of Zub-al-Adwanieh. The name is derived from a peculiar conical mound, which starts abruptly out of the plain and rises to a height of some fifty feet. Its slope is exceedingly steep. Its peak is only about eight yards round, and the traces of masonry on the top and a large quarry close at hand suggest to the observer that the mound itself is artificial.

From Adwanieh we rode on to Tell-el-Hammam, passing on the opposite bank of the river a large *ghazu* of forty horse which was not at the moment engaged in active operations. Our route lay through a long stretch of desolate, uninhabited country, and we did not pass a single soul on the road. I think it may be taken for granted that since the grazing is magnificent, and many powerful tribes dwell in the vicinity, there is ample room for a sedentary population as well as for pastoral nomads, whose position need not be threatened by the coming of the railway.

At Tell-el-Hammam we found a small tribe of Turkomans who cultivate the ground to a certain extent. They were poor, uncouth people; but it is well worth noting that in appearance they differ not in the least from the surrounding Arabs, whose language, habits, and dress they have adopted, although some

[1] According to Mr. Guy Le Strange's map in *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, this must have been the site of Bajerwan.

of them still talk a certain Turkish patois among themselves. Their account of their coming to the Jazirah is curious. They state that many years ago they dwelt in a certain mountain called Uzun Yaila, and while there they were very wicked, though what crimes they committed they could, or would, not state. As a punishment, the Sultan of those days drove them out, and put them under the subjection of the Arabs of the Jazirah, in which state they remained until the advent of Ibrahim Pasha, who is now their lord. They eagerly asked when the railway would be built and they would become rich. An old Mollah who was travelling said: "Mount your horse, and ride for eighteen hours, either north or south, and you will ride through a valley three hours broad, which might be full of villages, but the government gains nothing from it."

About half-an hour from Hammam there are some extensive ruins, known to the Turkomans as Ambar. They would appear to be the remains of a river post, for in the centre of the mounds there is a large cistern, which, owing to the close proximity of the river, would hardly be of use except in case of siege. From Ambar[1] we set out in an easterly direction, in search of the camp of Ibrahim Pasha; for although we were already well within range of his jurisdiction, his actual camp was still a good fifty miles away.

After leaving the valley of the Belikh, we entered a barren and stony tract, which presented no very interesting features, although it was noticeable that nearly every hill of importance bore signs of ruins. I should imagine that this region would still be habitable, if some arrangement could be made for storing the water from the various torrents which stream down the valleys in the spring and early summer. Seven hours' ride brought us to the camp of the Adwan tribe. The position of this tribe gives some insight into the political history of the Jazirah. Originally a sub-tribe of the Anazeh, it migrated to Mesopotamia from the vicinity of Tadmor at the time of the Shammar invasion, early in the last century. Since then it has gradually fallen away from its Arab neighbours and has grown more closely associated with the Kurdish clans, so that now, by intermarriage, in the process of time it has become almost

[1] This tallies exactly with Mr. Guy Le Strange's Hisn Maslamah.

entirely Kurdish. The men are broadly built and coarse-featured, the women tall and independent. Its Shaykh is a certain Mahmud Agha, who can only talk Arabic with difficulty.

The people were neither polite nor loquacious, and the contemptuous and chilly manner in which I was received was something of a shock after the profuse hospitality and hearty welcome I had been given elsewhere. The only person who was decently civil was the Agha's son, who asked me the following questions in rapid succession:—Was I well? Had I left all well at home? Was I happy in his company? Would I accept his service? Was I very well? Had I a son? Was he well? Was I myself quite well? and so on; but as he presently threw off his clothes and capered about stark naked, repeating the same questions to some gypsies, I gathered that it was his infirmity, and not his virtue, to be preposterously polite to all comers.

The Kurd Agha seemed almost as dull as his son was extravagant, and beyond blinking into the fire, seemed incapable of giving any other sign of life. At the end of a quarter of an hour of this entertainment, he said gloomily enough that he supposed I should want something to eat. To annoy him I said I should be grateful if he would give me a dinner. However, I was well punished for my malice, for no sooner had dinner been brought in on a tray, than the idiot son pranced into the tent bearing a large bowl of water. "O Guest," he cried, "you must be thirsty!" and with that dashed the whole of the contents over me and the food in front of me. The Agha, who I think was one of the most inhuman persons I have ever met, continued to stare in front of him with the same expressionless countenance as before.

The next day's ride was practically like the first, save that as we were now well within the Pasha's dominions, small caravans of two and three donkeys became noticeable, and such people as we met on the road did not flee at our approach. They were mostly small traders and merchants travelling on business among the various tribes of the Milli confederation, or else Armenian villagers from Viranshehr engaged in transporting fodder and butter from the town to the camps, and vice versa. As far as I could ascertain from these people, they were perfectly safe once

they were within the Milli limits, and were treated with kindness and respect, though on the borders they were liable to be robbed by the Anazeh and southern Shammar.

We passed several Kurdish encampments, but could obtain little or no information from the people, save that news had come that Miss Shattuck's[1] friends had been robbed by the Berazieh, and that many people had been cast into prison on her account. Late in the evening, such horsemen as we met were armed with government rifles, and we knew by this that the Pasha's tents were not far off. About an hour later we descried a large cluster of tents at the foot of a low *tell*, and learned that this was the camp of Ibrahim.

On our arrival the Pasha, whom I had visited before, came out to meet us, and embraced me after the Bedawin fashion—that is, by kissing my right shoulder. I was immediately led into the great tent, which was supported on over 100 poles and measured 1,500 square yards of cloth. Coming from the glare of the mid-day sun it was at first difficult to distinguish anything clearly in the recesses of this vast tabernacle, but at the farther end about 150 men were standing around the low divan on which Ibrahim sits. He led me to the divan, which was placed before a camel-dung fire, on which stood the usual number of coffee-pots.

The Pasha was a tall, slimly-built man, with a purely Kurdish face with a large lumpy nose, rather piercing inquisitive eyes, a fairly high forehead, and a large mouth. In repose his face had a rather sinister expression, being fixed in that settled frown common to all tent-dwellers who live in a sunlit desert; and this grim and thoughtful look was not lessened by a sword-cut under the eye, which caused the lower lid to droop. In conversation, however, his continual smile was open and pleasing, and his manner almost genial. In curious contrast to his face, his hands and feet were extremely small and delicately formed.

In the course of conversation he showed a wonderfully accurate knowledge of the affairs of Europe, England's relations with Ireland, and many matters which pointed to other sources of information than Turkish newspapers, of which of course he has a plentiful supply.

[1] A lady missionary at Urfa.

The crowd of people who surrounded him were persons of every creed and race in Turkey, mostly come on business—the settlement of quarrels, litigation, taxes, sales of butter, wool and clothes, and other matters in which the Pasha is interested. A list of those to whom I spoke at random will give some idea of their diversity :—

1. A Yezidi (devil-worshipper), converted to Islam.
2. A Turkish doctor attached to the Pasha's staff—an exile.
3. A Hamawand ex-*zaptieh* who robbed the Alexandretta mail of 2,000 *mejidiehs* (about £330), was sentenced to 150 years of imprisonment, but dug a tunnel out of the prison and joined the Pasha.
4. A robber who had murdered four men and a woman near Haleb.
5. An Armenian innkeeper, the bearer of a present of camels from the Karagetch Kurds.
6. A robber whom I myself captured two years previously near Nisibin, now a merchant.
7. A Shammar Arab who came to report the settling of a blood feud in his own tribe.
8. A Haideranli Hamidieh from Van.
9. A Circassian Bey, in attendance.

The Pasha excused the presence of the less respectable of these men, saying that the desert law obliges him to protect those who seek his hospitality. This is true enough, but the Pasha finds its observance convenient, for those whose lives are forfeit must stand or fall by their protector and form a desperate body-guard. On the other hand it must be said in justice that these fellows behave well enough in the Pasha's borders, none of them being of that type which the police in England know as "habitual criminals," *i.e.*, men who cannot help stealing.

Ibrahim's first remarks were very characteristic—Had the Algeciras conference really broken down? And was it true that Sarah Bernhardt's theatrical travelling tent was larger than his? After talking for a little time on various topics, he came with me to my own tent, and showed me in private a letter he had received from the Grand Vizier ordering him to keep a close watch on me, and report all my doings. He then asked me what he should say. I told him he had better tell the

truth, and report that I was travelling for amusement and instruction.

In the course of conversation he spoke of the Milli Kurds as a nation separate from all others, and let drop the fact that his influence extended much further than the tribes actually subject to him. He also told me that the Kurdish race was divided into three branches, the Milli branch, the Zillan branch, and the Baba Kurdi branch; that the Milli and Zillan branches were ever enemies, and that neither of them recognised the Baba Kurds as other than Persians. He also said that there was really no distinction among them—between the Dersim Shia tribes and his own of the Karaja Dagh; and that the Kurds had no special dislike for, or bias against, the Yezidis of the Sinjar Dagh, who were also Milli Kurds. Strangely enough, he stated that there was a connection between the Jais Arabs and the Milli Kurds, though it was indistinct and vague.

He also gave me a sketch of his tribal history, which was not uninteresting.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the days of Sultan Mahmud, there were three great princes in the South-western Empire. Ayub Bey, his own great-grandfather, ruled in the Jazirah from Lake Bingol to Jebel Sinjar. Mohammed Bey of Rowandiz was master of all the lands between the eastern frontier and Mosul. In the cities the great landowners and notables were their own rulers, while in the southern pastures Shaykh Sfug was chief of all the Bedawin tribes. All these chiefs lived in a state of constant and glorious war, and paid little heed either to the Pasha at Baghdad or the Sultan at Constantinople. However, at last the government began to take notice of their doings, and sent the great Reshid Pasha against them. Mohammed of Rowandiz was seized and killed, while Shaykh Sfug and Ayub Bey were made prisoners and carried off to Diarbekir, where they died, and the Turks were for a time complete masters of the country.

Then came the war with the Khedive of Egypt, and the invasion of Syria by Ibrahim Pasha, the son of the great Mohammed Ali. Timawi Bey, who had succeeded Ayub, having no cause to love the Turks, joined the Egyptians, and under their orders marched against the Turkish troops stationed at

Mardin in order to prevent their joining the main army then moving from Malatia on to Nezib. Timawi succeeded in his mission and captured Mardin, but was himself killed in a skirmish soon afterwards. Then came the retreat of the Egyptians and the re-establishment of the Ottoman supremacy, when the Milli Kurds came to great poverty and misery. They had no one to lead them and fought among themselves, and were ever plundered by the Tai and Shammar Arabs, who destroyed the villages and drove them up to the Karaja Dagh, while the government troops kept them from approaching their old camping-grounds near Diarbekir and Lake Bingol. So matters stood for a time, until Ibrahim's father, Mahmud Bey, the son of Timawi, grew up and took command of the tribe; but by that time they were so stricken by misfortune that he could do nothing with them. They would not follow him, and in despair he applied to the Pasha of Damascus for some troops to assist him in collecting his people. The Pasha gave him a hundred men, and told him to do what he could. With these forces at his disposal he drove back the Tai and Shammar, and collected his tribe together at Viranshehr. In a few years he attained considerable prosperity and power, and eventually had the hardihood to build a castle at Viranshehr. But Omar Pasha, who then had charge of Diarbekir, promptly crushed this movement, taking Mahmud prisoner and burning his castle.

Ibrahim himself was then about seventeen years of age, and by his father's command he took fifteen mares and fled to Egypt, with directions to endeavour to enlist the sympathy of Ismail the Khedive on Mahmud's behalf. However, young Ibrahim was inexperienced in palace intrigues, and fell into the hands of an unscrupulous go-between, who defrauded him of the mares by pretending to give them to the Khedive, while in reality keeping them himself. This man gave Ibrahim a sum of money, saying that that was all the Khedive would do for him. Finding that all his efforts in Egypt were fruitless, Ibrahim went to Damascus, to seek counsel of the Emir-el-Haj, whose family is Kurdish. This man advised Ibrahim to lay his cause directly before the Sultan, and gave him introductions to people of consequence in the capital. When Ibrahim reached Constantinople, it chanced that the Khedive Ismail was also there,



IBRAHIM PASHA.

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and the young Kurd found an opportunity of reminding him of the ancient connection of the Milli and the Egyptian Government. Ismail happened to be in a good humour. He received Ibrahim's petition favourably, and obtained from the Sultan Abdul Aziz an order for Mahmud Bey's release, whereupon Ibrahim returned to Viranshehr and helped his father in the government of the tribe.

Mahmud Bey's health had, however, been shattered by his long sojourn in prison, and he died soon after his release, leaving the headship of the clan to Ibrahim himself. The latter carried on the traditional customs of the tribe, robbed caravans, protected Christians, and plundered the merchants of Diarbekir, until his depredations grew so intolerable that at last the government caused him to be seized and sent to exile in Sivas in company with some six other tribal chiefs. There he remained in great discontent for some six months or more. At last he managed to send a letter to his mother, then living at Viranshehr, begging her to send him some horses for his diversion. His mother, realising what was in his mind, obtained permission from the government to send seven mares to Sivas. The animals duly arrived, and the Kurdish chiefs were permitted to come out and inspect them. At a given signal, each man, having selected a beast, vaulted on its back, and made off down the highroad to Malatia. The pursuit was soon taken up by soldiers, police, and spectators, and for three hours was it kept up with vigour. After that the chase began to slacken, until at last the fugitives found themselves followed by only four soldiers, who still clung to the trail. Ibrahim and his companions suddenly halted and awaited their pursuers, who blundered on to them unexpectedly. "What do you want with us?" shouted the Kurds. The soldiers, completely taken by surprise, halted, saying that they wished to help them to escape. "The best way to do that," said Ibrahim, "is to go back to Sivas"—advice which the soldiers found it convenient to follow.

Thereafter the party thought the highroad too dangerous, and turned off into the mountains. This ruse well nigh proved fatal to their scheme, for about sunset they lost their way, and lay all night on the hillside, not knowing where they were.

In the morning they followed an unknown track, which luckily led them in a right direction. But by noon Shalim Bey's horse fell down, unable to move any further. Then Ibrahim counselled the party to take refuge in the branches of the adjoining trees. Hardly were they safely hidden than a troop of cavalry came trotting past, and approached so close to the refugees that they could hear them talking to one another. Another day was spent in the mountains, when the party had a narrow escape from capture by riding into a village where the troops were sleeping the midday siesta.

The following evening the pursuit was so close, the mares of the fugitives were so spent, and moreover, they had so completely lost the direction in which they wished to go, that matters looked for the moment almost hopeless. Ibrahim was then inspired by the most daring tactical idea I have ever heard of. It struck him that if the pursuers finally lost the trail, they would naturally go in the direction of Urfa, whither it was known the fugitives desired to proceed. Accordingly, Ibrahim and his companions, having located the village where the cavalry had billeted for the night, encamped about a mile behind it on the road along which their enemies had already passed, for, as Ibrahim said when he told me of the adventure, "Surely they would not turn back empty-handed—they would go any road but that." So it was that for about five days the Kurds used their pursuers as guides in an unknown land; but in the vicinity of Malatia even this stratagem failed, for the pursued lost all trace of their unwilling leaders, and one bleak morning found them weary, lost and forlorn in an unknown region among unknown people.

A well-to-do peasant riding in a bullock cart came across them. "Where are you going?" he cried after salutation, and Ibrahim with ready wit explained that they were a party of nomads seeking some stolen camels. The peasant answered, "You are Kurds and I am a Kurd—you are Ibrahim of the Milli, and I am an Agha of the Sinaminli, who are of the Milli race. The soldiers are seeking you in the villages—come with me and I will hide you."

A few hours later the seven men were eating their first hot meal in the guest chamber of the Kizilbash Agha; but their

trials were not yet over. A hundred and fifty miles of unknown country still separated them from their own territories, and it was while they were discussing with their host as to the best means of completing their journey that a trumpet sounded outside the village, and they knew that their pursuers were at hand once more. Disregarding all convention, the Kizilbash bundled his guests into his harem rooms, and awaited the arrival of the soldiers.

An officer of cavalry entered: "Peace be with you—are seven men hiding here?"

"You will not find them here," replied the Agha.

"What is this?" cried the officer, picking up Shalim Bey's camel-hair cloak, which in his haste he had left on the floor. The evidence was damning enough, for a camel-hair cloak in the Taurus is about as common as one of Mr. Lock's silk hats.

"I have told you," replied the Agha, "that you will not find the men you seek here. If you bring a regiment, however, you will be able to look for them. As it is, food is here for you and your men; but if you would break into our harems we shall fight you, and we have 700 rifles, and 2,000 within call."

The officer realised that with twenty men he could do nothing; he accepted the situation, ate his dinner, and rode away. That night Ibrahim and his companions were transferred to another village, and thus, night by night, they were handed on from one Kizilbash tribe to another, until one morning they found themselves on the banks of the Euphrates within two days' desert ride of their own tribes. From the vantage point of home it was not difficult for the chiefs to make their peace with the government, which was then on the verge of war with Russia and had other things to do than to seek out mere petty disturbers of the peace.

It was not long after the close of the Russo-Turkish War that Ibrahim began to give proofs of his ability and foresight. His first act was to make firm friends with the sturdy little colony of Circassians at Ras-el-Ain, and then to gather under his dominion the lesser Shaykhs of the surrounding tribes, and to part them from their own people, in this way securing parties of 100 and 200 tents at a time. So well did he manage his diplomacy, that before many years had passed the Milli

Kurds began to present a far more powerful front than ever before; yet all this was brought about by craft and intrigue, and the progress was almost imperceptible to the Arabs, who were occupied almost entirely with their own bickerings and feuds. Ibrahim's policy consisted in being friendly to the strong, conciliating the weaker, and bullying only the weakest.

About this time a great event took place. Ibrahim, together with some other Kurdish chiefs, was enrolled in the Hamidieh, and after visiting Constantinople was promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General and given the rank of Pasha. After this his policy grew bolder. He began to resist the Anazeh and the Shammar, and after frequently driving them back, at length cleared his district of their worst parties. He encouraged Christians (Armenians and Chaldaeans) to take refuge in the vicinity of Viranshehr, and established a bazaar in that town, which rapidly increased in size. While other tribes and chiefs plundered and massacred Armenians, Ibrahim protected and encouraged Christians of all denominations. It is estimated that during the great Armenian massacres he saved some 10,000 Armenians from destruction. He gained over the powerful Arab tribe of the Jais by marrying the sister of the Shaykh; the Afadli, Baggara, and Sherabin followed; the Chichichieh Kurds in the vicinity of Mardin also joined; but the Tai, Jibbur, Anazeh, and Shammar now became his mortal enemies. To such a politician as Ibrahim this solid block of enemies was too dangerous to be left untouched. Profiting therefore by a long-standing feud between two parties of the Shammar, the Pasha by wheedlings, bribes, and oratory gained over the great Shaykh Jurrallah, who commanded 1,500 tents.

Meanwhile the Pasha's riches increased with his power, and the growing importance of Viranshehr brought caravan traffic into his dominions. Formerly it had always been taken for granted by nomads that caravans were legitimate objects of plunder or blackmail, but as in Ibrahim's case they were bringing in wealth and prosperity to his town of Viranshehr, and indirectly money and commodities to his own camps, his view of caravans soon altered completely. Not so, however, the Karagetch, who eyed the progress made by the Milli Kurds with no great favour. Now all caravans to Viranshehr, whether

from Diarbekir or Urfa, had to pass through the territory of this tribe, which invariably plundered the passengers with great freedom. In 1904, Ibrahim Pasha protested, but his protests were disregarded; he then requested the governor of Urfa to keep order, but the governor prevaricated; so Ibrahim took the field in person against the Karagetch. It is the customary policy of the Turkish government to interfere in tribal quarrels whenever there is a probability of a decisive action, and on this occasion a captain and fifteen mounted infantry were sent to separate the combatants. They came upon Ibrahim and his forces in the vicinity of Suverek, and the officer ordered the chief to retire to his own country. Ibrahim refused, high words ensued, the captain was shot dead, his men disarmed and sent back to Urfa, while the Milli Kurds proceeded to engage with their enemies. In a short time the Karagetch were completely defeated, and their tents and baggage carried off to Viranshehr. They were obliged to sue for terms, and engaged not to interfere with caravans in future. To consolidate this treaty, two marriages were arranged between nieces and nephews of the two contracting chiefs, and Ibrahim returned to the Karagetch not only the captured stores, but also much more than he had taken, while to conciliate the authorities for the death of the officer, a caravan of five hundred camel-loads of butter was despatched to the Sultan at Constantinople.

It was at this time that everybody thought that Ibrahim's power was trembling in the balance, and imagined that his days of favour were ended. He had struck down a son of the Sultan; every *zaptieh* and soldier was thirsting for his blood; it needed only a word, and every armed man in the district who was serving or had served in the army was ready to march against him. At this very moment, Ibrahim, with amazing boldness, came to Urfa, the centre of the government, to spend the latter days of Ramazan. A special telegram from Constantinople ordered that he should be entertained, and his enemies, who a few days before had been expecting his downfall, were now stricken with influenza and remained unwell until the Pasha had departed with his train of followers, after spending some days in the city.

The Pasha's policy now consists in raiding only such villages

as are under the domination of those who are neither his friends nor his allies, such as the Berazieh, in the hope that they will thus be driven to accept his rule. While he does not spare Moslems under the government, he seldom hurts Christians. He has spies in every town in the district, and in his camp has established a refuge for robbers and evil-doers on condition that they behave themselves while in his district.

Ibrahim Pasha is a very strange character. Without a doubt a natural leader of men, he possesses, as must nearly all men who have experienced the larger mutabilities of life, a great power of self-control, and is yet in some things as wayward as a child. To me he is intensely interesting as a study, for in him we see in the flesh a type of man who passed away in England with Warwick, and for whom even Turkey will soon have no room. In him we see the feudal baron and the eastern despot and the nomadic chief; amid his tents we may glean some idea of the life in the camps of Timur and Attila; in his rise to power, there is some suggestion of the early success of the Osmanlis—in his weakness and strength, some of the faults and qualities of Mithridates.

There are no people in the world so prone to hero-worship as those of Asia. The poorest murderer is often looked on with reverence, the most craven footpad exalted to a kind of Robin Hood. It is on such meat as this that supermen thrive. And when, perchance, a man appears whose craft is only equalled by his political astuteness, then we see the extraordinary phenomenon of a feeble invalid, such as Ibrahim, ruling a host of divided and untamable peoples.

The day following our arrival the Pasha gave orders to strike camp and move. The whole of the baggage train, which numbered no fewer than 2,000 animals, was on the march in an hour and a half from the issuing of the order, a little more than that time being required to pitch the camp. On the march the Pasha rode a young white *dallul* (trotting camel) at the head of the caravan, accompanied by 50 horsemen of his private staff and a pack of about 15 couple of gazelle dogs—the whole forming a sufficiently striking picture.

During the whole of my five days' sojourn with Ibrahim, affairs were continually being carried on in the great tent.

Horsemen with messages, letters, and despatches were continually coming and going on all kinds of business, which the Pasha transacted with extraordinary celerity, never seeming to have to pause to think and always appearing certain of his own mind.

We left the tents of Ibrahim early on the 14th, and proceeded to Ras-el-Ain. The route lay over a range of rolling hills, which rose some four hundred feet above the land we had left. Ras-el-Ain is a village which, in spite of its greenery and beauty, presents a sad and mournful picture to the traveller. Here are the mounds that mark the ruins of many noble cities, which have risen in succession one above the other, marking in turn the Greek, the Parthian, the Roman, and the Arab masters of the land. Each one has served its purpose, and each one has followed the fate of its predecessor in becoming the prey of a conqueror. Lastly we find a crumbling ruin of more recent date. It is the great village of five thousand houses, built by the refugee Circassians some twenty years ago. The poor homeless people were sent out by the Turkish government to restore the ancient fertility of the sources of the Khabur. Here they came with their families, and, delighted with the pleasant prospect of the glorious oasis, set manfully to work to build, to cultivate, and restore. But alas! their hopes were doomed to failure. Smallpox, cholera, fever, and unsuitable clothing worked havoc among the wretched people. In a short time the graveyard contained more occupants than the new town, and the immigrants abandoned their settlement in dismay, leaving behind them only a few determined men, who clung doggedly to their new land.

This woeful disaster should not, however, discourage those who hope for the restoration of the Jazirah. The Circassians are a people who have many admirable qualities; but cleanliness is not one of them. A mistaken sense of honour made them retain their close-fitting native dress and woollen cap, which they refused to abandon from a fear of losing their nationality. The consequence of this obstinacy was that sunstroke, apoplexy, smallpox, and cholera found them an easier prey than would have been the case with any other type of settler, and the failure of the Circassians need not be taken as indicative of

any insuperable difficulties in the way of agricultural development.

From Ras-el-Ain we proceeded by a new route to the Girgan Su, passing on our way the Jurjub river, which waters a considerable tract of country. Once the Khabur is passed, the whole scenery undergoes a complete change. From a land of low grassy wolds, where the view is always curtailed by a horizon of rolling undulations, we passed into a country where the visible distances are immense, and the natural features distinct and pronounced. Whereas we had formerly looked eagerly for the sign of some slight hill or landmark, we now stared blankly at the Castle of Mardin, some fifty miles away, or at the snowy peaks of the Karaja Dagh, which hung, as it were, suspended in the air at nearly double that distance. If we turned south, the forbidding bulk of the Sinjar stood before us. Nor was it a flat and empty plain which was enclosed by these far-off barriers. Instead of empty *wadis* we crossed deep but narrow perennial streams, which threaded their way through steep valleys, or alongside unending ranges of dark hills ; while, in place of the green grass to which we had grown so accustomed, we rode over masses of flowers, which dazzled the eye with their brilliancy and variegated colour, and whose honey-scent was at times almost oppressive. I am sadly ignorant of botany, or I should attempt to give some account of them. As it is, I can only say that the slopes were splashed with yellow, blue, and purple, while on the river-sides our horses could hardly force their way through the snowy banks of daisies and cowslips. And yet this well-watered country, whose fertility bursts out in this torrent of blossoms, was almost uninhabited.

At Girgan we found a large encampment of the Kikieh Kurds, under the head Shaykh, Abdur-Rahman Agha. According to desert custom, I rode up to the door of the Shaykh's tent and gave the usual salute, but instead of the deep Bedawi chorus of welcome, I only heard a confused and somewhat grumpy grunt. However, a cushion was thrown down, and a place made for me by the fire ; but not a word was spoken. The Agha, a tall forbidding-looking man, with something in his face that reminded me of a stern unbending Scotch minister I once knew, stared at me from beneath his overhanging brows.

The silence grew almost unbearable. The piercing gaze of fifty armed men is somewhat discomposing, even to one well accustomed to such scrutiny; and in this case the death-like silence made the operation more than embarrassing. My attempts to open a conversation were grotesque failures, which I blush to think of. My very inferior Arabic utterly deserted me. My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and I gave up the matter as hopeless. Jacob began to take up the task with some trepidation, when, as a climax, the Agha cut him short, saying, "Be quiet!" and got up and stalked away without a word. At this I really began to grow uneasy, and wondered what was going to happen next. However, the Agha suddenly returned, followed by no fewer than four men, laden with food of every description. "Eat," said that man of stone in a threatening voice, and, being hungry, I was glad enough to comply with his request. "Ces gens sont curieux, mais pas tout à fait mauvais," was Jacob's comment, as he gobbled down a succulent mouthful of rice.

After we had eaten our fill, Abdur-Rahman unfroze a little, going so far as to enquire my nationality, and matters became a little less strained, so that after a decent interval I was able to retire to my tents.

A little later in the afternoon, the Agha, his Mollah, and his nephew paid me a visit. Abdur-Rahman unbent so far as to discuss the new railway project. He and the Mollah were both strongly in favour of the scheme. The Mollah, proud of his knowledge, recited a list of great cities formerly existing under the Caliphs of Baghdad, and, pushing his spectacles up on to his brows, waxed eloquent on the subject of the speedy restoration of their former glory. "And," he wound up, "under any other government it would have been done long ago."

"You are stupid to say that before him!" cut in the Agha bluntly, and the Mollah collapsed, with a grin and a wink in my direction.

However, the Agha himself continued to discuss the matter. "Formerly," he said, "we Kikieh lived in villages here. Then the Shammar came and drove us out. We abandoned our last villages some twelve years ago, and built others on the

Karaja Dagh, where we now cultivate the land. However, we still come here to pasture our flocks in spring, and also to show we have a right over the land."

I asked him if the Shammar ever gave him any trouble.

"Formerly," was his curt reply.

"Why not now?" I asked. For one moment I thought Abdur-Rahman was actually going to smile. His dull eyes twinkled, and I caught a gleam of long yellow teeth under his moustache. However, it turned out only to be a yawn.

"Formerly," he said, as if continuing his sentence, "we only had lances; now the Shammar are very cunning with a lance. Their mares are also fleet, and their raiding parties outnumbered my men. Besides, my people were inferior even man to man. However, I lately bought fifty Martinis at great expense. Now Martinis are of no use to men on horseback against men with lances. The Bedawin shout, and ride quickly towards the men with Martinis, who always get frightened and run away. Now I knew this when I bought the Martinis, and so did the Shammar. However, the Shammar did not know what I knew, and that is, that a man on foot with a Martini is equal to many men with lances. Last year the Shammar drove off many thousands of my sheep. I took out my fifty men with Martinis, and rode after them. When we came up with the Bedawin, I told my men to dismount. When the Shammar saw this, they thought we had come to surrender, and galloped at us like demons, screaming and brandishing their lances according to custom. I told my men to stop still on the ground and wait. When the Shammar came within a minute's distance, I told my men to fire all at once. The Shammar ran away, but we fired four times before they were at a safe distance. Their Shaykhs were angry, and said it was against the rules of *ghazu*, and shameful, for we wounded twelve of them. But they gave me back all my sheep, and I do not care what the Shammar say, for now they are afraid to touch any of my animals, and must rob elsewhere. The Bedawin do not understand Martinis any more than I understand lances. These *ghazus* are very foolish. Ibrahim likes them, but they do not lead to riches as does fellahin business and farming. When the railway comes, I shall be very rich. I shall bring all my people down here, the

government will be forced to protect them, and they will build many villages, perhaps six or seven hundred."

I asked him what the Shammar would do when the railway comes.

"Go back to Nejd, or else act as herdsmen for us," he grunted.

I give Abdur-Rahman Agha's opinions as they were given to me, and I think that they are, in fact, the views generally held by the more intelligent Moslem leaders in the Jazirah, with the exception of the Shaykhs of the Shammar and the more predatory Kurdish Aghas. The Kurds and bastard Arabs are by no means stupid people, and a life of pastoral piracy has been thrust upon them by the government policy of encouraging tribal feuds. It is difficult to make an estimate, but I am of opinion that the great bulk of the pastoral people of the northern Jazirah would immediately adopt a settled life if they were only assured of security ; and I am certain that the present police forces of the government are ample to preserve order, if only the officers were permitted to take the necessary steps for checking raids and punishing offenders.

After leaving Shaykh Abdur-Rahman, we rode straight to Ain-es-Sufiyeh, on the river Jagh-Jagh. The land through which we passed was perhaps even richer than that we had hitherto traversed, the vegetation in the valley of the Awij being surprisingly luxuriant. But the day's march differed from the previous ones in the fact that even from the highest eminence not a sign of a tent or human habitation could be descried. Indeed, during the whole thirty miles we did not remark a single deserted camping-ground, or any visible mark of previous occupation.

At Ain-es-Sufiyeh, where there are the foundations of an ancient bridge, I noticed some thirty buffaloes roaming along the river bank. On making enquiries of my guide, I learned that these animals were the property of a certain holy man, whose beasts and herds were not liable to attacks from thieves or *ghazus*, it being the common belief that if an evil-doer should lay hands on any of the Shaykh's property, death or misfortune would befall him. The tale is even told of a certain robber, who once seized the hobbling shackle of one of the

Shaykh's mares, and whose hand clove to the metal until morning, when the Shaykh, who knew from a vision what had passed, came to the place where the robber lay, and released him by blowing on his hands.

From Ain-es-Sufiyeh we set out towards the Sinjar, which is separated from the Jagh-Jagh by a barren plain some forty miles broad. This plain was the first stretch of real desert we had seen since leaving Rakka ; the land seemed poor and weak, and the quality of the pasture unsatisfactory. When we got within about ten miles of the Sinjar, however, the scenery underwent a considerable change ; the ground became broken and bare, and presently we descended into an evil-smelling plain of salt marsh, reaching the sea of Khatunieh about twenty minutes later.

The sea of Khatunieh is not only placed upside down on Kiepert's map, but also greatly exaggerated in size. In the centre of the lake, and connected with the land by a narrow causeway, is a little island occupied by a warren-like village inhabited by Arab fellahin. The village of Khatunieh is, I think, one of the most depressing spots I have ever visited. Its situation is gloomy and dreary beyond belief. The hills in the background are of a snuff-coloured yellow ; the dull brackish waters of the lake are darkened by rank, black sedges, through which rustles an evil-smelling wind, heavy with the fume of salt marshland ; while the village itself is in keeping with its surroundings, being only a collection of tumble-down huts, half built, half dug out of the ground, more like the lairs of wild beasts than the dwellings of human beings. Around the holes through which the inhabitants creep into these burrows is collected the filth and rubbish of years, reeking with a sickening odour of decay. The miserable wretches who call these dens their homes are of the lowest of their race : diseased, poor, avaricious, and of such low mental calibre as to be almost half-witted. It would be hard to imagine more depressing company after a long and tedious journey. Yet they were loquacious, even beyond the wont of Arabs, and, chattering like apes, would give neither rest nor peace to me or my people until driven away by force.

The next morning we set out once more for the Sinjar, and

after four hours' ride at length reached the foot of the Sikeniyeh Pass. I always understood that the Yezidis who inhabit the mountain were a much maligned people, groaning under a cruel oppression, and so on ; brave, courteous, industrious, with an ingrained love of freedom, and possessed of all the rest of the Balkan-mongers' stock-in-trade virtues. My experience, however, does not encourage me to put much faith in the theory.

Soon after we entered the pass, we were unpleasantly surprised by seeing four men, in white garments and armed with rifles, spring apparently out of the ground, and brandish their weapons in a threatening manner. An old man on a distant hill, however, shrieked out some words in a devilish tongue, and the four men vanished as quickly as they had appeared. A little further on the trick was repeated. The men were wild-looking ruffians, with a lowering look of animal ferocity in their eyes, that might well give one pause to think whether one had been wise to visit this nest of Satan's brood.

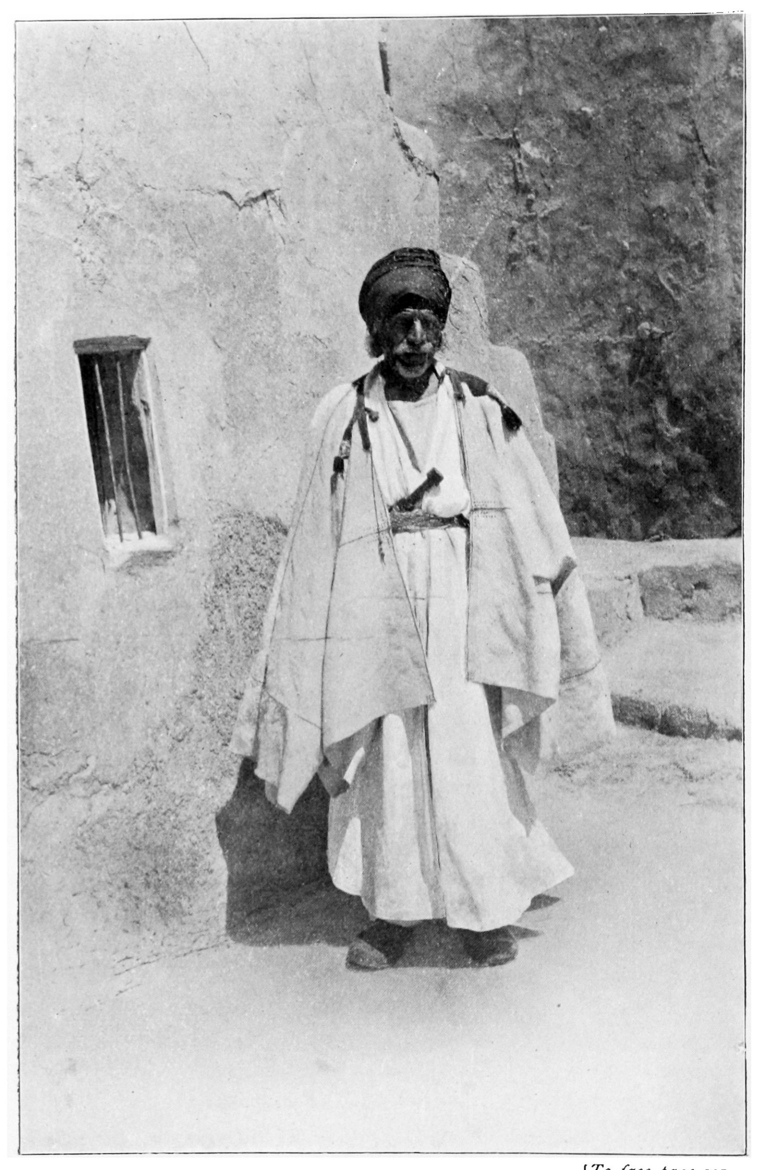
After an hour's anxious ride, we reached a small encampment. Not a word of welcome was vouchsafed us. As I ate my lunch a savage-looking man snatched the food out of my plate, and wolfed it without a word. On every hill, white figures flitted about, crying shrilly, and pointing to my party. My escort looked doubtful and anxious. Presently a tall, sombre man came up and spoke to us in Arabic. He was a Shaykh. "Go," he said ; "I will go with you. Go quickly, you will bring trouble to us if you stay, and trouble to yourself. Mount and be off!" We took the fellow's advice, and started away, the Shaykh accompanying us.

As we passed a second encampment, a strange-looking creature came towards us, shouting "Khoweh! Khoweh!" (Tax! Tax!) He seized the bridle of one of the horses and stopped the caravan. The people were streaming from the encampment, whistling a signal to others who came running from the fields. "Pay him," said the Shaykh, "there is danger!" With great reluctance we gave the brute some money, and rode on as quickly as we could, nor did we draw rein until we reached the camp of Khalil Agha, a chief of some note amongst these people. The latter, a, man with a strange and evil

countenance, received us with a chilling reserve that gave us but little encouragement after the preceding events.

As I sat in the Agha's tent, scores of his white-robed henchmen came in, and glared at us in grim silence. Strange-looking fellows were these Yezidis. Their features are so small and pinched that their faces have an appearance almost asp-like. Their expression is predatory and vindictive. The fact that their noses are generally neither straight nor hooked, but pointed and turned downwards, so as to press down on to the upper lip, adds to the unpleasantness of their countenances. Their voices are shrill and fierce, their manners brusque and unceremonious; their bodies are lithe, active, and wiry, and in stature they tend to be above the average in tallness. Their clothing is strange in the extreme—on the head, a tall brown conical cap, around which is wound a black or red turban; the body is swathed in a long flowing shirt of white, cut square at the neck, and a short cloak of brown leather; and pointed, curled-over shoes complete the costume. When I saw these curious figures around me, it seemed as if four thousand years had slipped back, and I was sitting among some forgotten primaeval people, such as those who carved their barbarous monuments upon the rocks at Ivriz.

There is an air of mystery about the Yezidis which may well account for all the monstrous tales that are told of them. As I sat in the tent, a man in black robes entered, and sat down opposite me. Great reverence was paid to him, many of the men kissing the hem of his garment. What or who he was, I could not learn. Presently I left the Agha's tent, and went to my own, where I found a crowd of silent men, slowly and deliberately examining all my furniture, while the soldiers and muleteers sat shivering with terror at a distance. All the evening crowds of people came trooping down from the mountain, to stare at my camp, and swell the ill-omened crowd gathered round it. At last, with a troop of some sixty at his heels, came Shaykh Hamo, the religious chief of these regions. He was of more cheerful aspect than the others, and helped to dispel the feeling of depression and helplessness that had gradually crept over me in the course of the day. He came into my tent, and I entertained him to the best of my ability.



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YEZIDI SHAYKH OF SINJAR.

He said that if war broke out between Persia and Turkey, the men of Sinjar would kill every Moslem within reach, a sentiment loudly applauded by the rest; indeed, the solitary yapping cry by which they marked their approbation of their pastor's speech was the only sign of animation which I noticed among them all that day. After heartily cursing the Sultan, Shaykh Hamo took his leave, and on his departure, a good many of the others stole away towards the hills.

After sunset my host, Khalil Agha, sent down six men to look after my camp, and their repeated and earnest enquiries as to what time I usually went to sleep, did nothing towards restoring my confidence. However, beyond a few stray shots fired at a distance, nothing of import occurred during the night, and the next morning we set off for the town of Sinjar. When my muleteers caught sight of the Turkish flag, which flies from the top of the hill on which the village is situated, they began to sing for the first time since the preceding day.

When we reached the Serai, we learned that the Kaimakam had gone off to recover some stolen sheep which had been carried off at the very time when we had entered the Sinjar. The next morning the Kaimakam returned, flushed with pleasure at having recaptured the stolen sheep. He was a man of a class rare among Turkish officials. By birth an Arab of Mosul, of good family, he is well off, and does government work rather for an amusement than for a livelihood. He has been employed for a considerable number of years as a Kaimakam, in more or less troubled localities. The people are loud in his praise, and for good reason—he does not "eat" money, keeps the peace, and punishes evil-doers. He laughed loudly at Constantinople ways, and pointed out to me the extreme folly of its policy.

"At Constantinople," he said, "people do not know what Zebar, Amadia, or Sinjar mean, and either they send a young *mektebli*, who can neither ride nor rule, or a fond old man, on the brink of the grave. Anyhow, one who is a stranger, and a stranger who is generally a thief. Now these Ashiret people, like the Kurds and Yezidis, want careful ruling. Hold a piece of sugar in one hand and a thick stick in the other, and you will manage them; but you must always have a little sugar

ready. Constantinople people do not understand the 'sugar' business, and sometimes they hit so hard with the stick that it breaks, and much of the land is ruined. This country would be enough to make many government people rich, if only they knew how to rule it."

The town of Sinjar is interesting from the fact that it is the most westerly city in which the Mosul style of architecture is made use of. Many of the customs of Irak are also observed. The peculiar one of women bathing in public I have noticed at Zakho and Rowandiz, while at Mosul it is a scandal which has grown into a by-word.

The next day we left Sinjar, and set out for Mosul, the journey to El Hadhr having become out of the question, on account of bands of thieves and rumours of war on the Persian frontiers.

Our first day's march from Sinjar brought us to El Khan, where we found the Mendikan tribe encamped. The people are mostly of the Yezidi religion, but the Shaykh and a good many of the families are Moslem. They account themselves one tribe, and, having lately been very roughly handled by the government, are pleasanter people than the more westerly Yezidis; although rude and uncouth, they do not seem to be possessed of such a supply of superabundant malice as their brethren. Near the encampment there stands a ruined *khan*, over the doorway of which is the presentment of two men with halos slaying two dragons. The men have pointed boots, and swathes on their legs, while the dragons are very similar to the Chinese conventional monsters.

While we were with the Shaykh, news came in that El Haddi ibn Ferhan had been slain by some of his uncle's men—an event of some importance, which has thrown the whole of the northern Jazirah into utter confusion. The rumours of war and general combustion on the Persian frontier decided me to go to Mosul to make some enquiries for my own personal information.

From Khan I proceeded to Tell-'Afar, a small village inhabited entirely by Turkish-speaking people, who, according to their own account, are escaped slaves and runagates who settled in the ruins of an ancient city soon after the departure of Timur's Mongols. The Turkish type—high cheek-bones, narrow eyes,

and broad, flat face—is still noticeable, but rare, the majority of the people being undistinguishable from the local Arab fellahin. The old men told me that they formerly lived independently in a kind of commune, and under a selected leader held their own against the Shammar Arabs, to whom they paid no taxes, even when the latter held Mosul in subjection. Their great strength lay in a large and solidly-built castle, the ruins of which now cover the hill commanding the village. This refuge, which was capable of accommodating a garrison of more than two thousand men, besides women and children, proved a safe retreat in times of stress, and afforded a secure rallying point for the numerous dependent villages, which now lie ruined and desolate in the neighbourhood. In the days of Reshid Pasha, however, the Turkish settlers showed some stubbornness towards the government, and the independent régime was brought to an end by a military expedition, which laid the castle in ruins and established a government seat in its place. But the official rule did not prove so efficacious as its predecessor. The outlying hamlets were soon wrecked by the Arabs, and Tell-'Afar itself dwindled from a large town to a wretched village. A ghastly epidemic of cholera gave it a crushing blow a short time ago, and now a few huddled houses, and a broken castellated wall, enclosing a Mudir, who lives in a chink in the ruins, is all the traveller will find at Tell-'Afar.

The route from Tell-'Afar to Mosul is sad and depressing. Fresh ruins and idle lands, which might produce enormous crops, are the only objects that meet the eye. The government has destroyed the old feudal system, and has put nothing in its place. The one thing that gave me a distinct feeling of satisfaction was the fact that the menacing hump of Jebel Sinjar sank below the horizon early in the day, and with it departed many unpleasant reflections which had haunted me since the first day I entered its accursed precincts.

Mosul I found the same foul nest of corruption, vice, disorder, and disease as I have always known it. In eight years it has made neither visible progress nor improvement. Once Mosul was a greater town than it is now, but I see no cause for regret that its filthy purlieus are less in size than they were. It is not difficult to perceive that neither art nor industry has flourished

in Mosul for the last two hundred years. The new houses are as ramshackle, as insanitary, as stinking as the old; the old as ugly, as uninteresting, and as repulsive as the new. A brilliant sky gives no charm to this town of mud and mortar. Its blind alleys are narrow, evil-smelling, and as unpicturesque as those of Whitechapel; its mosques as devoid of architectural merit as a railway station. The people seem heavy, debauched, and stupefied by their surroundings. Apathy and greed are their characteristics. The shiftlessness of the Bedawi and the huckstering spirit of the pedlar combine to produce a stagnant and unpleasing personality, which, to a superficial observer, would bode ill for the new railway. But it is well to note that Moslem and Christian alike are anxious for the railway to be built, and that most of the faults of the men of Mosul arise from their long isolation in a pestilent climate. People even tell one that agriculture is on the increase, and that in spite of raids, locusts, and lack of transport, things are a little better than they were a few years ago. I was told by a leading merchant that, taking all in all, there was a net increase of 150 villages in the province. Yet Mosul town is an evil city. By night robbers stalk untouched from house to house, and the time of rest and darkness is made fearful by the cracking of pistols and confused cries of strife. By day, drunkenness and debauchery are openly indulged in. The population is rotted by the foul distemper, corrupted and rendered impotent by drink, stupefied and besotted by vice. The degradation of the city folk is not only physical but mental. Tales are whispered of dark and hideous sorceries and incantations—the noisome stench, as it were, of the charnel-house of that dead Paganism which the Cross and Mohammed have slain, but have as yet been unable to annihilate.

To my mind Mosul stands as a menace to the future of the surrounding country, and I cannot help thinking that the projectors of the new railway would do well to try to avoid the town. The standing nuisance of this sink of disease and horror will not be mitigated, but rather increased, by wealth; and if Mosul, in its present condition, becomes the chief town of a flourishing northern Mesopotamia, it will certainly contaminate the surrounding locality with the same sinister influence as Antioch of old spread over North Syria. Although the idea

may appear fantastic, I would strongly suggest that it would prove in the end a gain to the investor's pocket, if the company built the railway station ten miles from the site of the present city, and so laid the foundation of a newer and cleaner Mosul, in which some attention might be bestowed to sanitary regulations and public decency. The present city is so congested, and house-building is so cheap, that the project presents really but few practical difficulties.

My last view of Mosul was typical of the whole place. Well within the city, a cluster of some three hundred houses stands by the river. This quarter is the abattoir and tannery and dyery for the whole town. Its streets are ankle-deep in decaying guts and offal; the kennels run with congealing blood and stinking dye in sluggish and iridescent streams, nauseous to behold and abominable in odour. A fume of decaying flesh hangs in the air; piles of dung, horns, and hoofs stand in the filthy alleys, while here and there the puffed carcases of beasts, diseased and cast aside by the butchers, lie an offence against the sun. The houses are daubed with clotted filth, while naked men flit to and fro upon their noxious business. Yet, incredible as it may seem, there are families who dwell within this loathsome zone; men, women, and children inhabit these greasy dens, not from poverty or lack of better lodging, but from sheer idleness and apathy. The government has twice endeavoured to abolish this vile lair of dirt and pestilence, but on each occasion the attempt has provoked a riot.

## CHAPTER II

### IRAK

FROM Mosul we proceeded to Bartala, in quest of peace or war. At Mosul reports had been various and conflicting—war had been declared by England against someone; the King of England was in Constantinople, whether as the Sultan's guest or prisoner was not clear; the German Emperor had become a Moslem; the Shaykh of Koweyt had killed an Englishman; Ibn Reshid was in league with the Persians; Sautchbulak had been seized by the Turks; all the Kurd tribes had risen against the Turks; all the Kurd tribes had rebelled against the Persians; the English were at the back of everything; the Turkish troops were massed to massacre Armenians; the Sultan was dead; the Sultan was dying; the Sultan had abdicated in favour of his son; Sanaa had fallen, and the English had taken the Yemen!

Once Mosul is left behind, the traveller passes through a land of surpassing richness and fertility. The land is well-cultivated, and the villages are rapidly increasing in size and numbers. Bartala, which I had remembered as a small hamlet, was now almost a town. This prosperity did not in the least tally with the doleful tale recounted by the village priest, according to whom oppression and tyranny were the calamities of the hour. Apparently he did not approve of the local transport department's method of commandeering mules, the village having been mulcted of twenty; but as they had provided no men, I should imagine that the burden of mobilisation fell lightly on them in comparison with the Moslems.

Five hours' ride brought us to Kellek, where we found a

ferry of an even more terrifying kind than usual. As always, the boat was trebly over-loaded, and although in an apparently sinking condition was swirled across the seething torrent. During the journey by water, I made the acquaintance of a Rufai dervish, who, after a successful tour of self-torture in Syria, was making his way home to Sulaimanieh. When he learned that I had been blessed by Shaykh Saleh, he became my firmest friend, and insisted on taking me to visit the Agha of the Shekan Kurds, who were camped hard by.

I found the Agha to be an ancient, blear-eyed individual, who, like many of his peers, seemed never to stir from a mat stretched before a fire smouldering in a hole dug in the ground. The Dervish, however, paid little heed to him, and, having introduced me to the company, called loudly for dates and butter, a dish of which, he told me in confidence, he was particularly fond. This appeared to be true enough, for although an austere, religious man, he devoured an enormous quantity of the stuff. After the dervish had eaten his fill, the older of the Kurds began to ask me questions of a very embarrassing kind. Was England at war with Turkey? If not, why not? England had done her best to ruin Irak, she had armed Ibn Reshid, she had caused Shaykh Muntifik to rebel, she had betrayed the Shaykh of Koweyt, she had assisted the rebels in Yemen, she had egged on the Persians to oppose the Osmanli government at Wazna, she had stopped the railway bringing wealth to the country, she had caused troubles among the Christians in Macedonia, she had befriended the Armenians, who wished to subvert the order of things; in fact, England had done so much that I began to think that the German Vice-Consul had been paying my hosts a visit. But, as it turned out, they had never even heard of him, and I was fain to suppose that the Shekan Kurds had some other sources for their information.

I made a sad blunder in asking the Agha whether he was a Milli Kurd. He snorted with rage. "Does that Pasha think everyone belongs to his crew of mixed rapscallions? Is he going to ride over us all with his Mill, Mill, Mill? We are Kurds, and twice as strong as he or any of his men." This was true enough, for there is certainly no comparison as regards

physique, mode of life, or wealth—the Shekan, like nearly all the Baba Kurds, being strong of body, good shots, hard workers, and courageous fighters, men of gross manners, few words, and much sound common-sense. Their women are really remarkable for their beauty, and what is more wonderful is the fact that one often sees women of forty and fifty years of age hale and hearty, and well set-up, neither bowed with toil nor enfeebled and wrecked by premature marriage. The Kurdish woman has emancipated herself, and although she lives apart from the men is as free to ride abroad, take her leisure, or bully her husband, as any English woman. And with this emancipation comes a far stricter and higher moral code than elsewhere. Perversion and immorality are rare among the non-veiling tribes, and the fact that the "Frank" sickness is unknown among them goes far to prove the absurdity of all the theories regarding the impossibility of abolishing the veil in the cities.

From Kellek we rode to Erbil, where, much to my surprise, I found six battalions of soldiers who should, by all report, have been drowned in the Zab, or dying of dysentery or starvation at Wazna. The troops were from Sairt, Bitlis, Van, Diarbekir, and Malatia, and appeared well-fed and quite passably organised. They were, however, extremely bored and puzzled. They had been marching by slow stages since November, and were beginning to wonder where they were going to. The Wazna business is still an impenetrable mystery. The commander of the brigade grew quite angry while discussing the matter, and begged me to tell him what was really going to happen. He calculated that the expedition was costing at least £10,000 per week, and he could not make out who profited by it. As he naïvely put it, "You could not feed the men for less, and the government cannot afford to pay more," his point being that there was really very little margin for peculation. He added that it could not be for conquest, since the whole of Mesopotamia still required cultivation.

The town of Erbil is making no little progress. When I first visited it, eight years ago, it was practically limited to the *tell* which commands the plain; now the suburbs are nearly equal in size to the body of the city, and are increasing annually.



Girdi Kurds.

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The population reckon themselves as Turks, and state that they were sent to Erbil in the reign of Sulaiman the Magnificent. The Kaimakam is a Damascene Arab, and forms part of the suite of Izzet's brother, the new Vali.

The evening I spent in the company of the officers of the Van Regiment, who were most wonderfully perplexed at their peregrinations, and again and again appealed to me to know what it all meant. When I answered that I was going to try to find out, they said my object was unattainable, because the general himself knew no more than they did. In the middle of the night there came a telegram, ordering one battalion to set out at once for Rowandiz, and the rest to stay where they were. This order, the officers said, was precisely the same as the ones they had been receiving for the last three months, and created but little excitement.

From Erbil I proceeded to Uskaf Safka, the headquarters of the Girdi Kurds. The difference between the mountain camps and those of the nomads of the plains was very striking. The Highlanders' tents were pitched in regular streets; all dirt and offal were carefully kept out of the way; samovars, crockery, watches, sugar, and other unheard-of luxuries were in common use; the clothing of the men was rich and elaborate; donkeys took the place of camels; and in the tents loud human laughs were to be heard.

The Agha received me with great ceremony, and, as usual, was soon talking politics. England he knew not, but what he did know was the true history of the frontier business. The Mengar, Mamash, and Bilbas tribes are Sunni. In summer they go to Wazna, where last year they found some Persian soldiers. They accordingly sent to Sulaimanieh, and an officer came with four hundred soldiers and some Kurds, and slew fifteen Persian soldiers. The rest ran away. Since then the Turks have been at Wazna; and this summer, when the harvest is over, the Turkish Kurds will go and kill some more Persians. The head of the Mamash Kurds and the head of the Bilbas Kurds had joined the Persians; but the Turks had put other chiefs in their place, and the whole of the Ashirets hoped there would come a great war, in which case there would be much plunder. The extreme loyalty of the frontier tribes is a strange contrast

to the overt sedition lurking among the tribes of the Jazirah; the latter trembled at the idea of mobilisation, or of being called upon to risk their skins, while the former are eager to join the fray.

A short ride of six hours, through difficult country, brought us to Koi Sanjak, where I was received with great honours, two musicians riding before me and fifteen horsemen circling round me. I was much struck with the riding and outfit of my escort. Save that they were armed with home-made Martinis, they might have formed part of the army of Surenas. Their wiry little half-bred ponies galloped and scrambled among the rocks like antelopes, while the riders, whose seat resembles that of the Circassians and Persians, brandished their heavy rifles as if they were reeds. The leader of this bodyguard was a Hamawand in the government service, and was responsible for the peace of the *kaza*. Koi Sanjak I found in a state of great excitement, not on account of the Persian question, but because a local Jew had abjured his faith and become a Moslem, while a noted murderer and outlaw had been found dead on the high road. No one seemed the least interested in the prospect of war, but I heard loud complaints in the Mejliss as to the gathering of mules and animals for transport, though the Chaldaean priest told me that there was but little cause for the outcry.

The town of Koi Sanjak is increasing in size and wealth. The bazaars are quite good, and the merchants are growing rich enough to build large and commodious houses. The principal traffic is in arms and clothes, which are purchased by the local tribes. There are fifty-six Jewish and twenty Christian families in the town. While at Mosul I read an account of a visit paid by a Dominican father to Koi Sanjak in 1882. Even allowing for a little exaggeration on the part of the missionary, it is obvious that there has been a great improvement in the general condition of the town and the surrounding neighbourhood. Formerly the people of the town were poor and fanatical, and lived in a state of constant war with the local tribes, who apparently plundered the city at will. Now, however, the government not only has the country well in hand, but seemingly is not disliked—a fact for which I find it difficult to account.

From Koi Sanjak I proceeded to Siktan (five hours), a small village of the Khoshnao Kurds—poor, hard-working mountain folk, who seem very glad to welcome a stranger, and even more pleased to obtain small sums of money from him. Siktan is the residence of an Agha claiming to be descended from one named Ambudabest, a prince of Kurdish blood who received his lands from Imam Husain. The Khoshnao is a large tribe, but considered of little account. The men are supposed to be cowards, and own no horses; but like the rest of the inhabitants of the country, they are armed with Martinis. Their dress resembles that of the Girdi and Bilbas. The Agha (Mustafa Bey) informed me that six thousand Turkish troops had crossed the frontier near Serdesht, and were marching on Sautchbulak. He also said that the Persians always retired before them without fighting. In his opinion there would be no war.

At Siktan there is a large *medresseh* and several mollahs. I gathered that it was through their influence that the government held so strong a position among the tribes. Apparently Sunni ideas and traditions, particularly the theory of the Caliphate, have been inculcated with considerable tact among the Kurds, who were somewhat lax Moslems a few years ago, but are now strenuous believers. The astuteness of the Turkish government in pursuing this policy is worthy of admiration, for the highland Baba Kurds were formerly more independent than even the Bedawin. However, a studious cultivation of their religious sentiments, combined with promotion and employment in the public service, has gained for the Ottoman government what is tantamount to a new province.

The students of the *medresseh* prepared some verses in my honour, which were read aloud. On my giving a small sum to the Mollah, I was overwhelmed with most effusive thanks from the villagers, who are more than proud of the learning of their Mollahs.

From Siktan we rode to Balassan, a cluster of villages in the valley which divides the Rowandiz range from the Koi Sanjak group of mountains. The scenery was really superb; indeed I think there is no district in the world much more beautiful than are the mountains of the Turco-Persian frontier in spring. The contrast between the gentle greens of the budding trees, the

grassy carpets of brilliant flowers, and the menacing black and blood-red rock of the mountains, makes a striking impression not easily forgotten. It is this region that should appeal strongly to the artist, for there is never a single jarring or discordant note in the whole day's journey. Each valley village is a picture in itself, with its bubbling waters, low brown houses, and shady avenues of trees; while on the mountain-side are dotted the little castles and redoubts of the local chiefs, where one may still see in the flesh the feudal baron, fierce, hospitable, and proud as Lucifer. And this is not all, for there is plenty to distract the attention. Each passer-by on the road is armed with a Martini, which he generally unslings and loads at your approach, not with evil intent, but lest you yourself should prove the aggressor; for times are ever troublous in the mountains, and no man knows who may be his friend or enemy. Yet, strangely enough, this land of wars and alarms is wonderfully flourishing. The terraced mountain-sides are covered with magnificent vineyards; the glades are highly cultivated with tobacco and grain; by the riversides rich marshy fields of rice chequer the land with chessboard patterns of drains and canals; while, high up on the mountain peaks, one can descry the black tents of the shepherds and their slowly moving flocks.

At Balassan we found a local notable engaged in collecting the sheep tax. His method of carrying on this business was apparently to write down a list of names on a piece of paper, and then scratch them out again. At Balassan I also came in contact with a small colony of Jews, who are to be found in considerable numbers in these parts. They are striking and interesting people. Their chief employment is in silver work, tinker's trades, and weaving. They are generally handsome, and (I presume from continual intermarriage) exhibit in a marked degree the general physical characteristics of their race. As regards their religion, they are more than scrupulous in the observances of their faith. When I offered one some sugar, he told me he could not take it from my hand, but must pick it off the ground, as, if I gave it him, it would savour of payment; but if he found it, it would be a gift from God, the reason for this being that it was the Sabbath day.

Still no news of the war. More troops were reported to be

moving to the front, but of active hostilities not a word, save that the tribesmen had all been told to hold themselves in readiness to advance on Persia.

From Balassan we rode by a long and difficult road to Rowandiz. The rise of 2000 feet over the Balassan Pass carried us from late to early spring, the crops being at least two months behind those we had left. At Rowandiz the scent of the frontier dispute grew a little warmer. The townsfolk told us that the place was full of Pashas and officers from Constantinople, and I was directed to the house of the Ferîk.

There I found a Mutesarrif, a Staff Officer, a Ferîk, and the local Kaimakam. The Mutesarrif was a rude, uncouth Bulgarian Moslem, who betrayed the Tartar stock from which he sprang by his coarse manners, insolent behaviour, and flat, uninteresting face. The Staff Officer was a foolish, suspicious, effusive, brainless Constantinopolitan Turk ; the Ferîk, a sombre personage, who seemed labouring under the weight of some grave responsibility. The local Kaimakam was too oppressed by the presence of his seniors to make any other sign of life than clasping and unclasping his hands. All four seemed filled with anger and wrath at my appearance, and while paying me the usual compliments, they darted to and fro, whispering various questions to one another with bated breath. Presently the Ferîk left the room, and the Mutesarrif began to grow ruder in his behaviour than Heaven naturally ordained, and took his *tarbush* off when talking to me. By way of reply I put my muddy boots on the divan, which I am glad to say I damaged considerably. At this the fellow changed his tune, and offered me dinner and lodging, which I accepted. The Ferîk having returned, the whole party retired behind a curtain to drink *mastik* ; when they reappeared the Ferîk was more gloomy than ever, the Mutesarrif was half-seas over, the Staff Officer drivelling, and the Kaimakam heavily drunk. Presently dinner was served, interspersed by visits to the *mastik*-concealing curtain.

As the food and spirit began to work on their sluggish wits, the officials' tongues were loosened, and they informed me that they were the Boundary Commission. However, this burst of confidence was soon followed by a reaction. Suspicion and liquor combined inspired them with the idea of writing a

telegram to Constantinople, announcing the arrival of a British spy; and so drunk were they that they completely forgot my presence, and began quarrelling among themselves over the wording of the despatch. After this, they plunged into politics, and babbled and blithered on until a late hour, when they retired to rest. The only thing that was quite plain to me was that they had no map of the district worthy of the name, and had no instructions to act upon, and that they had been specially selected for their obstinacy, stupidity, and general incapacity.

The next morning they were sober, but more uninteresting than ever, and being depressed by headaches, complained of the bad air of the mountains, and the lack of any amusements or theatres. They grew very tedious while dilating on the charms of Constantinople and the attractions of the cafés. They examined my Kiepert's map, and condemned the frontier as marked therein, trying to pick a quarrel with me by making me responsible for the errors which they said they detected. It was not an easy task to explain to the Staff Officer and the Mutesarrif that Kiepert was a German and not an Englishman; whereupon they suggested a general conspiracy of European Powers to defraud Turkey of her rights. The Mutesarrif said it was all settled by Sultan Selim, who established a Kaimakam at Passova. The Ferîk Pasha evidently hated both his colleagues heartily, for while they were holding forth, he winked at me from behind their backs in a very suggestive manner. Towards lunch time, the Mutesarrif had several "goes" of *mastik*, and as he began to grow very offensive, I took my leave.

When I got to my tent, I found several officers waiting to visit me. What struck me as strange was their astounding frankness. They cursed the government, the supply department, and the medical arrangements. What they particularly wished to know was, why they were at Rowandiz, and whether there was going to be a war. The wastage of men from sickness which they described was really harrowing. Typhus and typhoid had swept away whole companies; yet there were only two doctors' assistants with the whole army. A young officer from Baghdad actually broke down while telling me of the decimation of the Diarbekir battalion. During the winter months the

men slept out in the open for lack of tents and houses, and two or three frozen corpses were dragged out of the snow each morning. At present the troops were recovering, but their morale had been sadly damaged by the ordeal through which they had passed. However, the general commanding the troops at Passova, Mohammed Pasha (Daghistani), is very popular with all ranks, and has greatly endeared himself to the Kurdish chiefs, whom he entertains with enormous banquets of rice, meat, and tea, besides giving them liberal presents. The majority of the chiefs are certainly on the side of the Turks, but of course, like all tribal headsmen, they are very liable to join the winning side.

From Rowandiz I rode to Kurrachin *via* the Serderia pass. The scenery was superb, but the enjoyment of its beauties a little marred by the badness of the road, which lamed one of my horses. This track, which is hardly passable for any but lightly-laden animals, is the only connection between the army on the frontier and the nominal base at Erbil. The whole of the supplies, consequently, have to be carried on small donkeys, who cannot perform a greater distance than twelve miles a day, or bear more than a quarter of a mule-load apiece. Not the slightest attempt has been made to improve the road, though half a battalion could work wonders in two or three weeks.

The stories of the depredations committed by the hungry soldiers are apparently much exaggerated, as we found the inhabitants of Kurrachin well supplied with poultry and grain. My escort had evidently been well primed by the Kaimakam with orders to keep a close watch on my doings, for a more surly or unresponsive crew I never met. However, as Rowandiz began to fade from their minds, they grew more companionable, and when we reached Kurrachin were ready to fetch and carry, pitch tents, or do anything we wished.

From Kurrachin we proceeded very painfully as far as Deyra, an ancient stronghold of Mohammed Pasha of Rowandiz, now the seat of a Mudir, and a captain of *mufrasis* (mounted infantry). Here we learned the bad news that the boat at Gerdmamik had broken down, and that we must return to Erbil, which we did on the following day, passing the village of Baherka, the residence of a very wicked Agha of the Girdi, whose beard is

dyed scarlet, and who sits on his house-top all day long with a spy-glass in his hand, looking out for passing strangers whom he may rob. We stayed about half an hour in his company, and only escaped his entertainment with difficulty, for a miserable puling son of his, aged about twelve years, took a sudden fancy to my rifle, which we could only wrench out of the old man's hands by main force.

While in the hills we met the Sairt regiment on the march to Rowandiz. Its transport, which acted as advance guard, consisted of about a hundred and twenty small donkeys, who, contrary to the laws of nature and official red-books, were conveying over mountainous country more than a mule should carry on a metalled road. For instance, twenty-five of these little beasts were loaded with two full boxes of ammunition apiece, besides rugs and kettles *ad libitum*. Some staggered along beneath heaps of tent canvas and poles, while others were completely concealed by masses of ambiguous furniture.

About two miles behind the caravan came the regiment itself, about five hundred strong, and a finer body of men I must say it has never been my chance to see. German boots had been happily worn out or thrown away, and the German march step forgotten, and instead the troops swung along in native slippers at a magnificent pace, the colonel leading on a beautiful white Arab, which he rode beneath the shade of a large umbrella. Behind the regiment we came across one of those pathetic incidents which shake all the cheerfulness out of one. We found a wretched soldier, raving in delirium. The poor creature was a cripple, who should never have been enlisted. A comrade was beside him, urging him to proceed a little further; but the man was past coaxing or driving, and as the Turkish Army has no ambulance, I suppose the poor fellow was left to die, as many others have been. To the Turkish soldier war is no more terrible than peace. Unfed, uncared for, unclothed, he is left to rave in fever on the road, to fester in some village hovel, or to lie neglected in some desolate ruined barrack, there to die.

Owing to the prevalence of fevers (typhoid, typhus, &c.) in Erbil, I decided to camp at Ankowa, a Chaldaean village some three miles north-west of Erbil. The Nestorians seemed sleek and well-to-do. There were no fewer than twenty strong mules

grazing near the houses, and the adjacent fields were splendidly cultivated. Nearly every man in the village had a Martini rifle, and each night large flocks of the finest sheep were driven in from grazing. Yet, nevertheless, a fearful tale of woe and bloodshed was unfolded to me by the priests: Kurds raided and murdered the peaceful Christians daily; the flocks were only a quarter of their former size; the fields were hardly worth cultivating; the priests (of whom there were six) scarcely had enough to keep body and soul together. However, two priests presently produced three bottles of a home-made and ardent spirit. One taste burnt my tongue and throat like fire; but the clergymen lapped it down like so much milk, and under its cheering influence began to describe the slaughter and confusion which had been inflicted upon the neighbouring Kurds on several occasions, so that by adding and subtracting the accounts given under the action or reaction of brandy, I came to the conclusion that the Chaldaeans lived in much the same way as their neighbours.

In the afternoon I went down to Erbil, and was invited by one of the rich merchants to sit in a kind of lounge situated over a large mosque. The room, which was scrupulously clean, and richly carpeted, belonged to the Ulema of the mosque, but was apparently the resort of all the wealthy Moslems in the town, who flocked in, towards the cool of the evening, to drink tea and coffee and smoke. The conversation wandered round various topics. The murder of Redwan Pasha at Constantinople caused much amusement and interest, as his family is well-known among the Kurds. The probability of a war between England and Germany was also discussed with some intelligence; and lastly the famous Baghdad railway. I think it is well worthy of notice that although not a single man in the room was in European dress, and most of those present were either attached to some religious fraternity or members of the official clergy, not a single word of dissent was expressed when an old man, in green robes and an enormous white turban, ventured to voice the opinion of the assembly by saying that everyone was sick of hearing of the scheme, and wanted to see it carried into effect. What I should have least expected was that all readily understood that caravan trade would increase, and not

decrease, when the line was built, owing to the fact that the lateral traffic from outlying villages to the main line would be greater than the present through transit trade. The old gentleman in green, however, stated that he thought great difficulty would be experienced in getting the nomads to settle down to regular work; not that the tribesmen were lazy, but that they knew that once they were chained to villages, taxation would increase, and they would be reduced to the miserable condition of the ordinary fellahin. Anyone who has compared the condition of the nomad with that of the settled populations of Irak would be inclined to agree with him.

There is one other point of interest about Erbil which I must not forget to touch upon, and that is its population. They are the descendants of Anatolian-Turkish colonists whom the Vizier Edrisi settled in Irak in the days of Sultan Selim. The language of Erbil is Turkish, but that is all there is about the town reminiscent of Anatolia. The architecture is identical with that of the ruins of Rakka, and the people are brown-skinned, and as aquiline in feature as the Arabs. Their conversation is polished and sprightly; their garments are flowing and dignified; their business instincts Semitic in keenness, and their predatory customs entirely Kurdish. This is all the more interesting in view of the fact that the Erbilis consider themselves pure Turks, and seldom learn any other language. The citizens of Erbil are noted for their audacious robberies, and used to vie even with the Girdi and Shaykh Bezeini Kurds. However, with the general increase of business, the Erbil people are gradually abandoning their evil habits, and adopting more legal means of earning a livelihood.

From Erbil I was obliged to retrace my steps toward Mosul, in search of an escort. The country between the River Zab and Erbil seemed to have grown somewhat disturbed since I had passed through it ten days before. Isolated horsemen continually haunted our flanks, and once a couple apparently prepared an ambush, into which, however, we did not walk, but turned the tables on them by making a slight detour. Of course they swore they had no evil intentions, and so on; but I was not sorry that it was they who were covered by our rifles, instead of *vice versa*.

The moment the Zab is re-crossed, an increase of cultivation is at once noticeable, which is of course due to the general immunity of the population during harvest time from the raids of the Baba Kurds. There is also a remarkable decrease in the number of breech-loading rifles carried. In South Irak the Martini has become a perfect plague, and I suspect that even the Turkish government itself will presently have cause to regret the apathy which permitted the whole of the southern nomads to replace their lances and flintlocks by weapons of precision.

From Mosul we rode to Zakho, and thence, after two days' rest, to Besh Khabur (Feshapur, Peshabur). I left my caravan to find its way thither by itself, and followed the river Khabur by raft. The town of Zakho has increased in size—an improvement entirely due to the efforts of the late Yussuf Pasha, the Agha of the Slivani Kurds, a man of considerable intelligence. Unhappily he died lately, and his successor, Hajji Agha, is not likely to carry on the works of building and improvement undertaken by Yussuf.

Between Mosul and Zakho, new ruins meet the eye on every hand, and the same may be said of the country beyond the Tigris between Besh Khabur and Jazirah-ibn-Omar. The nomads have been deliberately encouraged to make the position untenable for the fellahin in order to drive them on to H.I.M.'s private *chiftliks* near Mosul, where, of course, ample protection is offered. It is, indeed, hard to conceive a more insane piece of selfishness.

At the ferry of Besh Khabur I saw a good example of the utter uselessness of Syrians in an emergency. After I had crossed the river, the servants followed with the mules, and the boat, having been doubly overloaded, was pushed off. A little way from the shore it took in a little water. In spite of Jacob's efforts to keep order the muleteers began to howl and scream, while endeavouring to throw the mules overboard. In the confusion an oar was lost, and the danger became very serious. A horse jumped into the river, nearly sinking the boat, which drifted helplessly down stream. Never did I hear such heart-rending prayers and imprecations as came across the water. The dread of death pushes the Arab mind to horrible limits.

Some cursed God and their Prophet, others uttered blasphemies too horrible to repeat, mingled with abject prayers and vows. Fatalism was suddenly swept aside, and one came face to face with a kind of despairing devil, whose words were an outrage to human ears. In a few moments the boat was driven ashore, whereupon the men who had been shrieking for mercy fell to fighting among themselves with obscene words and ill-directed blows, hysteric tears of half-quenched fear and an impotent and bestial fury mixed in one strange passion. The spectacle was too revolting to watch with patience, and, seeing that all were safe, I turned away. By us the passions are attempted to be suppressed; with Syrians they are cultivated.

After spending one day at Kesrukh, we rode to the foot of the Elim Dagh, where we came into the territories of the Jacobite Christians. These people, who, according to their own account, are Kurds and are divided among the surrounding tribes, seem an intelligent and hospitable race of people. I was surprised to hear no complaints as to the aggressions of the shepherds of the plain, who have completely destroyed the more southerly Moslem villages. In appearance and language the Jacobites differ not in the slightest from the Kurds; indeed, at first glance it would seem probable that they are of the same race. I learned that one tribe in the vicinity numbered Christians, Yezidis, and Moslems among its members, and that they lived together much as do the Mendikan of the Sinjar. However, races are difficult to unravel in this country, for bad Church history, Moslem unanimity, and Armenian falsehoods have almost completely destroyed or obliterated legendary traditions.

The heights of the Elim Dagh constitute a wonderful position from which to take a glance at northern Mesopotamia, for around it are scattered all the warring elements of the midlands of Asiatic Turkey. Far away in the dim southerly distance, one can descry the blue haze of the ill-omened Sinjar, the dwelling of the fierce untamable idolaters. To the south-east, the rolling barren hills of Mosul are speckled with Arab and Kurdish tents. To the left of them the great Tigris flood winds unseen down its deeply-scoured bed, and further east the huge mountains of the Persian frontier are piled in impressive masses. Northwards the jagged crests of Hakkiari rear themselves to

heaven, while due north lie the ranges of the Armenian highlands, which fall away westwards, to merge into the rolling plains of El Jazirah.

It is difficult, nay, impossible, to describe the ever-changing varieties of colour and form of this prodigious vista on a cloudy day in spring. Now the scene is of one uniform dark-olive tint, which merges gently into the blue of the mountains. Suddenly a gleam of sun throws one snow-covered peak into wonderful prominence; then a black thunder-cloud moves quickly across the horizon, dulls, displays, and deserts a quarter of the world. The plains mottle and change from strips of black to gold, and gold to green, as the moments pass. The barren rocks of Mardin cool from a dull fiery red to a mournful grey, to glow once more as the sun strikes them. And so the spring day passes from glorious, cool and wholesome dawn to blazing, noonday heat, to cloudless and starlit eve.

Here a pretty little incident occurred by the way. While riding over the hills, we met a flock of sheep in charge of a little Kurdish boy, aged perhaps eight years. I noticed he had a book in his hand. On being asked, he thanked God he could read; so we halted for five minutes, while the child read aloud a chapter from the Koran, for which we gave him a penny, on condition that he should pray for us.

From Amerina we rode to Middo over a monstrous road of bogs and stones. The villages all belonged to the Jacobites. The scenery was dull and uninteresting. The Jacobites improve on acquaintance, though their priests impress me as dull fellows, almost as unapproachable as Mollahs. They are inordinately proud of their learning, and tend to fanaticism in their ideas. It is the priests who prove the greatest stumbling block to my racial cross-examinations, for just as a village elder is about to recount to me some interesting pre-Christian legend, a dour black-turbaned man breaks in with: "Adam begat Abraham; Abraham begat the Jews; and we are Christians; before Christ there were nothing but Jews and infidels, only two races," and so on, for in the priests' minds nationality and religion are inseparable—which, by the way, is a curious throwback to the theory of the particular tribal god. Anyhow, by main force I extorted from the laity that it was their opinion

that they were really Kurds of Kurdish race, in which I am inclined to agree with them.

From Middo to Midyat we rode through a land of ruins, hills and oak trees. In such villages as exist, I noticed that the round arch was adhered to even in the modern houses—an interesting fact, as it is the only survival of Imperial influence I have come across. The monastery of Deir Amar is well worth visiting. It has a fine inlaid pavement in the chancel, a fair gold-and-black mosaic over the wooden altar, and in the middle of the church a curious bakery for the purpose of preparing altar breads.

A little way beyond we met a large body of troops, some five hundred strong, in pursuit of a wicked man who had fled from Bitlis. They had apparently been after him for thirty days, and judging from the country in which the refugee had hidden himself, it seemed to me probable they would continue their labours for some time.

Midyat is a very pretty little town, seemingly growing in prosperity, as I noticed a number of new private houses of more than ordinary size, both well-built and handsomely designed. I might mention here that once the Tur Abdin is entered, all tincture of Irak vanishes from the domestic architecture, and pleasing and cleanly walls of hewn stone replace the bulging tottering masses of plaster which we called houses in Mosul.

From Midyat we rode (nine hours) to Quillit, through a prosperous and well-cultivated strip of rocky hill country. The population is mixed Christian and Moslem ; so far as I could judge, the Christian preponderated. I noticed that as one proceeds further north, through the Tur Abdin, a blonde complexion is to be seen in increasing frequency. The blondes are by no means handsome, however, being extremely coarsely-featured, with thin sandy hair and beard, small blue eyes, and large hooked noses. This is a type I have only observed once before—if I remember rightly, among the Sinaminli Kurds of Alpunar in the Taurus. However, the Christians of north-eastern Tur Abdin are a fearful ethnological puzzle, as they reckon themselves to be Arabian, and speak a barbarous dialect of Arabic. The Mahalemi Arabs, who live side by side with Christians, are certainly more like Kurds in outward appearance, but have, I

DEIR AMAR.

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suppose, some grounds for calling themselves sons of Ismail. I remarked that the only noticeable difference between the Arab-speaking and Kermanji villages was that in the former, whether Christian or Moslem, the round Roman arch was replaced by the pointed Saracenic. Rifles are scarce thoughout the Tur Abdin, and the old flintlock is in general use.

While I was talking to the brisk and pleasant young squire of Quillit, a sinister and oleaginous person squirmed up to me, and, having assumed an attitude half-cringing, half-insolent, said: "Yow air English. I arlso tark Eenglish; I read the good book, being Protestant." Now I will here state, on my honour, that I have been trying to take an unbiased view of American missionary effort; yet when I saw this fellow, why was it I thought of Chadband and Uriah Heep?

We proceeded from Quillit to Diarbekir in two days. Once we had passed the great mountain range which shuts off the Tur Abdin from the rest of the world, we entered the region of Diarbekir. One could not help being struck by the immediate and dismal change in one's surroundings. Ill-cultivated land and miserable villages were the first things that impressed one. The inhabitants, who are Kurds, are tall, dark, and unprepossessing. They are the same type as one meets at Suverek and on the western slopes of the Karaja Dagh. They appear to be idle, thievish, and cowardly; indeed, I imagine that the ill name assigned to the whole Kurdish race arises from the fact that these particularly unpleasant people are the only Kurds whom the majority of travellers meet. As a matter of fact, they have no particular tribal designation, and appear to be a collection of outcasts and refugees, who have either abandoned, or been driven away from, their proper clans. At any rate they have no connection with any nomad confederation, unless, perhaps, they are looked upon as Karagetch. Side by side with these low Kurds live Armenians, who are much the same as their Moslem neighbours, save that they are, perhaps, more industrious.

The country between Mount Ahmedi and Diarbekir is as dull and uninteresting as its inhabitants — brown, stony, and unwooded, it offers no attractions of any kind. Even in a remarkable green and balmy spring, it seemed desolate and

unpleasing. What it must be like in winter and summer, I can hardly imagine.

The town of Diarbekir has a sombre and ominous appearance from without. The great dark walls, which bulge out in frowning bastions, give the exterior of the city a prison-like aspect. Within, although the streets are cleaner than those of many Turkish towns and the houses better built, the funereal black of the basalt, of which the whole of the dwellings are constructed, has a depressing effect. The native artists have endeavoured to relieve the dreariness of the picture by introducing white stone ornaments and decorations; but the effect is that of a mourning-card, and fails to cheer the eye. The inhabitants, who must trace their origin to the low villagers who dwell without, are obviously of the same debased race, though paler and less well-formed, and whether Christian or Moslem, are equally displeasing. The Ulu Jami—the one building of note in Diarbekir—is such a perfect architectural puzzle, that I must give up in despair the task of describing it. It outwitted Fergusson, and I do not propose to march where angels fear to tread.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MIDLANDS

AT Diarbekir my Syrian muleteers were so shaken by their experiences in the Sinjar and at the ford of the Tigris that I could no longer keep them. I parted with them with sorrow, for they were excellent, honest, hardworking fellows, and for ordinary travelling one could not have wanted better men ; but they had lost confidence, and once Syrians get the "blues," there is no holding them together : they grow despondent and hopeless, and expect and await nothing but disaster.

As I had to get new men I decided upon Kurds, and sent Jacob into the bazaars with instructions to find me people whose courage could be relied upon, and who knew the various dialects. Three men were presently produced—a Baba Kurd from Sulaimanieh, named Kadri, a Kermanji from Azerbaijan in Persia, named Hasso, and Mamo, a Zaza from the Dersim. I have met many people in Turkey, but never three such men as these, nor with such records.

Kadri, it turned out, was a Hamawand. He was a fair-haired, wiry bundle of rags, thirty years of age, with a face like a clenched fist, a scar across his forehead, and a voice like a rusty file. "O Bey," he said, "I am poor, and ready to go anywhere, but I cannot go to Sulaimanieh, for there a man slew my brother, and so I had to kill him, and his people are against me."

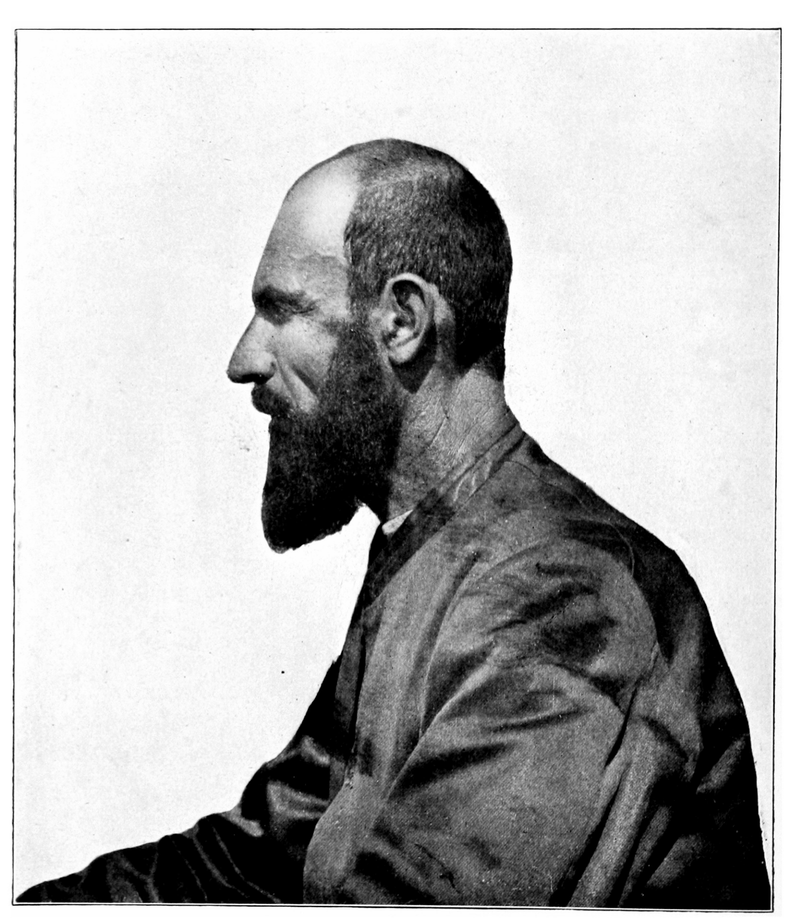
Hasso was literally a giant. He stood 6 foot 3 in his socks, weighed about 15 stone, and had a face like a large, good-natured baby. He talked like a naughty but not malicious child, in a little soft voice ; and with lowered head and shuffling feet gave this account of himself : "O Bey, I am a robber, but

if I come with you I swear I will never rob any one. I have never killed any one. I used to live in the forests of Kastamuni, and take carpets and saucepans from travellers, and then sell them. I used to rob by threats, for there the people carry no arms. I was twice in prison, and now I am here at Diarbekir. I have two passports—one Persian and one Turkish—and can always get out of prison." Later, when we reached Kastamuni, Hasso used to cover his head with a cloth for fear he should be recognised by his former victims. The chief of police of that province indeed did identify him, but for my convenience left him in peace.

Mamo the Zaza was the most remarkable of all. He was a little elfish fellow, with a sharp nose, soft eyes, and a low voice; silent, discreet, swift in his movements, a very type of his people; an excellent shot, a demon to work, and absolutely without any sense of fear. His simple story was as follows: "O Bey, I was a Zaza of the Dersim, and the government people took me as a soldier. I did not like being a soldier, and I had no religion, for I was a Zaza—and we Zazas know nothing—so I stole away one night with a rifle and became a robber. I used to sit behind a stone and shoot people on the Khozat road, and when they were dead I took what they had. In that way I shot sixteen people in the course of time. Now, glory be to God, I see that was wrong. I am a Moslem and have a wife and children here in Diarbekir; and I will come with you wherever you wish."

It was with this extraordinary trio that we set out from Diarbekir, and truly can I say that never in the course of five months did I have cause to repent of my bargain. They were men who would go anywhere and do anything—quiet, reliable, disciplined, and as honest as the day. They looked after the animals as if they had been their own, and never once did we miss either a bit of harness or a handful of grain. The whole of their wages they sent to their families; and on several occasions when things looked threatening, they filled one with confidence by their courage and determination.

From Diarbekir we set out to explore the region between the Tigris and Palu. Once the river is crossed, it is easy to realise that the people who inhabit the left bank are a very different



ARMENIAN PRIEST AT DIBNEH.

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race from those who encumber the right. The majority are Kurds of the Tiriki tribe. They are small in stature, wiry, good farmers, and very fond of rich and expensive clothing. Their features are irregular, and do not tend to one general type. I should say, indeed, that their shortness is their only distinguishing characteristic. As in the Tur Abdin, I remarked that in every village there is a proportion of fair-haired people—I should think about one in twenty—a fact for which I cannot in any way account, unless the Gallic garrison of Amida left some Mendelian recessives behind them.

Our first day's march brought us to Sarijik, a small village of no interest or importance. Our road lay along the banks of the Tigris, and from careful and repeated observations I have come to the conclusion that the cartographers have made a serious blunder, either in the position assigned to Diarbekir, or in the track of the river-bed, as, although many other landmarks answered my call, I could by no means make the minaret of the city other than due south. However, as my topographical efforts are those of an amateur, I am quite ready to bow my neck to German science, if it is prepared to maintain its position with a theodolite and sextant.

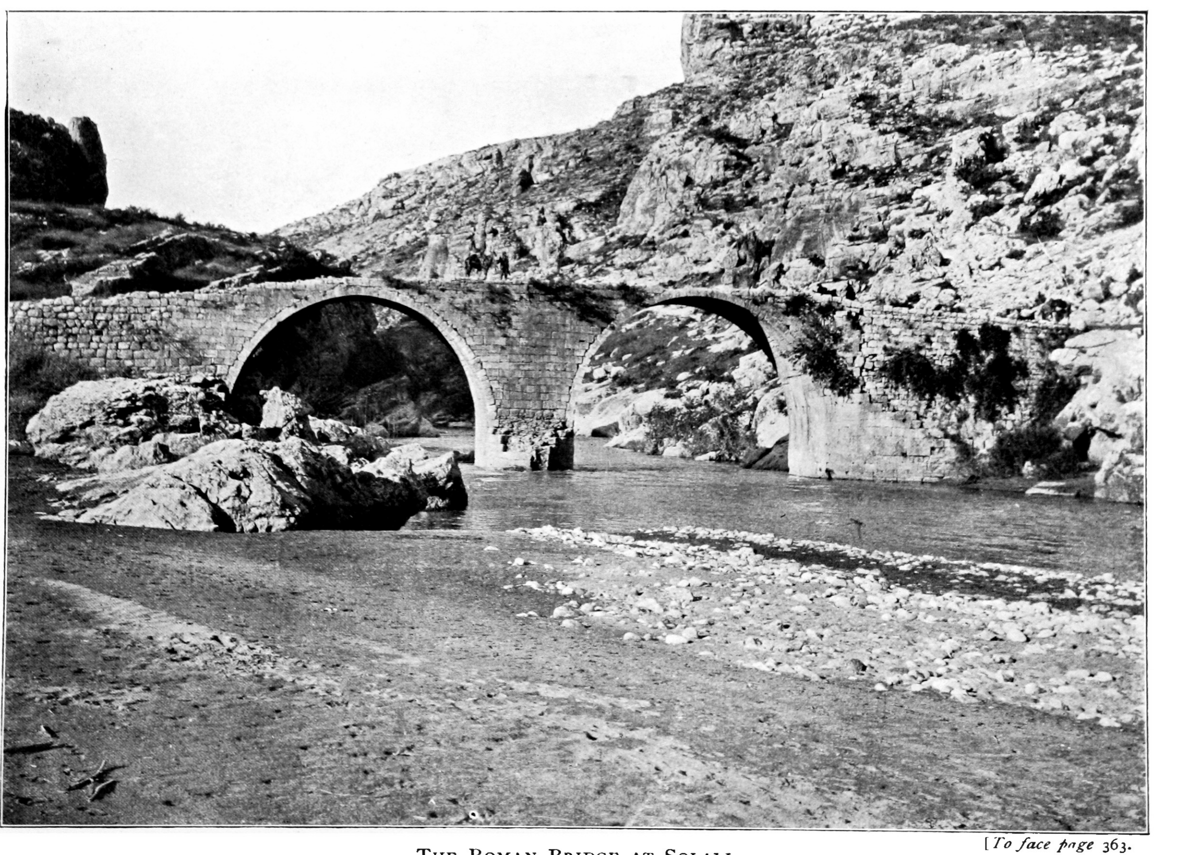
From Sarijik we rode in six hours to Dibneh, through the district of the Tiriki Kurds, to whom I have already referred. The scenery undergoes a considerable change as one approaches the Taurus Range. From brown and green wolds, one passes into a broken belt of rocky hills, which presently merge into open valleys of oak forest, and cultivated fields of surpassing beauty. Occasionally one meets signs of ancient civilisation, either in the shape of quarries or rock-cut tombs ; but I searched in vain for inscriptions.

The village of Dibneh is inhabited by Armenians, who are independent and wealthy. According to their own account, they are a lonely colony, and have dwelt there from time immemorial. They are identical in physiognomy, habit, and dress with the Tiriki Kurds, by whom they are surrounded, and bear not the slightest resemblance to the ordinary Armenians one meets in the districts of Bitlis, Van, or Diarbekir. On being asked, they acknowledged this ; and the village priest, who was a man of some intelligence, gave it as his opinion that they were

only Armenians in religion, and not in blood. The difference between the profile of the priest—a local man—and his assistant—an Armenian from Diarbekir—was so striking that I photographed them both.

At Dibneh, after a deal of trouble, we secured a guide, who volunteered to show us the way to Bakîr Maden, *i.e.* "copper mine," a village, said he, distant some seven hours from Dibneh. This statement was true enough, if it referred to the actual direct distance in miles; but the route by which he led us took us no less than twelve hours to cover. The first hour, however, brought me a pleasant surprise. We asked the guide why he was making a considerable detour, and he informed us that it was to take us to a bridge. This did not interest me very much, as I expected to see the usual tottering bundle of sticks and loose stones spanning a roaring torrent—a sight that had grown so common that even the speculations as to whether the day had come when I should be drowned or dashed to pieces, which usually crossed my mind when a bridge or ferry was mentioned, did not thrill me. What was my surprise, therefore, when, on looking down from a summit into a gorge below, I beheld two perfect Roman arches, supporting a causeway and parapet! I can hardly express my delight at making this little discovery. The camera was haled out, and no less than ten photographs were taken of the bridge. Kiepert and the guide-book are equally silent about it, so it is *my* bridge—and a very strange one it is, standing on two piers, which lift the arches some twenty-five feet above the river. The arches and masonry are of a solid and imposing kind. The roadway—some seven yards broad—is perfect, save at the top of the second arch. The bridge itself stands at the entrance of a short but chasm-like gorge, which leads the Diarbekir Su into the open valleys of the Sus district.

What struck me as most peculiar about the structure was that there was no sign of a road leading to it from the steep rocky mountains on the right bank of the river. It is, indeed, a singular fact that many of the finest ancient bridges in Turkey, such as the one at Kiakhta, are built in inaccessible places. I suggest two explanations—(1) that then, as now, a governor built roads and bridges either out of caprice or to serve some



THE ROMAN BRIDGE AT SOLALI.

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private ends ; (2) that a bridge of a permanent description was required to be held by a few men, and if its approach were difficult, a small force could perform the office of its defence more easily. Still, this does not explain why, as in the case of this bridge at Solali, the structure should be broad enough for wheeled traffic, for which, from its appearance, one would infer it was intended.

After crossing Solali Bridge, we turned down a difficult and slippery track, which led us a little way down the gorge, and then branched off sharply to the right, taking us over a tall, nameless mountain range. The fact that this conspicuous landmark has no name reminds me that the whole country between Palu and Diarbekir is singularly poor in nomenclature, mountains, rivers, torrents, and even villages being equally unconnected with any definite designation. One bunch of villages will have one name, and the people, whether Christian or Moslem, dwelling therein are known by that name, even as are the rivers passing the villages, the valleys in which they lie, and the mountains which overlook them. The old wrangle as to the right appellation of the Murad Su possibly arises from this cause.

After passing the mountain, we entered a fine deep valley, running up towards the north-west. The mountain sides were densely covered with stunted oaks, which relieved the greys and yellows of the slopes. Here and there one could see the tall poplar trees and spreading mulberries which marked the site of a village. Around the villages, open clearings had been made for purposes of agriculture ; and the young barley made rich carpet-squares of an almost bluish-green, amidst which ran little twinkling streams of clear mountain waters, turned off from the springs into narrow channels to irrigate the soil.

The first village we reached was that of Ure, and it is inhabited by Zaza Kurds. More than that I cannot say, for the most rigorous cross-examination failed to elicit any information. They apparently were under the impression that they were Moslems, but said they were really only animals, and knew nothing about anything. In appearance they undoubtedly resembled the Yezidis of the Sinjar, their tallness being in striking contrast to the almost dwarfish Tiriki and Armenian

villagers whom we had just left. The women seemed to enjoy an even greater amount of liberty than elsewhere, and made great fun of the caravan. Of the camera both sexes were equally shy; one of the men said, referring to the lens, "God only knows what is looking through those great eyes."

From Ure we descended into the valley, which we crossed, and entered a great gorge leading to Pirasan. In this gorge I remarked a small fountain with a round arch of considerable antiquity, and a little beyond it about twenty yards of solid paved road. As this is the direct strategic road from Palu to Diarbekir, the discovery may be of archæological importance. The village of Pirasan is situated on the mountain side, which, from the bright red and livid green colour of the rocks, is apparently rich in some mineral deposit.

From Pirasan one mounts into a small flat table-land known as the Pirasan Dasht. About four hours' riding carried us across another broad valley to the foot of the Taurus mountains, where we entered the Weshin, Khoshin, Koshin, or Veshin, Boghaz (*i.e.* pass). At the entrance of the pass we found a large copper mine, Bakîr Maden, being worked by the local Kurds. I obtained two samples, one of the ore, and the other of the melted slag which is the product of the ore, and which is sent to Diarbekir. It was impossible for me to obtain any particulars as to the mine, as I have no knowledge of geology. The various stones which I picked up along the road may, however, afford some information to experts. I might also add that the whole of the Veshin Dagh and the Veshin Boghaz is composed of similar materials, and I presume that if the mine can be worked with profit by Kurds, who smelt the ore in a caldron heated on a charcoal fire, the deposits must be very rich.

From Bakîr Maden we proceeded to Palu, following the windings of the pass until we reached the summit of the range, whence a broad, but somewhat hazy, view of an immense stretch of country was obtainable. The descent to Palu leads one through an uninteresting stretch of great red mountains, dry, dazzling, and barren. At Palu we crossed the Murad Su (Euphrates) for the second time. The modern town is the first southern town where one comes in contact with people who call themselves Turks, and also the first town where one finds the real

Armenian or Palgrave's "shapeless bundle of clothes." Truly they are unattractive, the men huge, burly, heavy creatures; the women dull-eyed and plain. Their bunchy and sombre garments give them a mournful and dismal appearance, and in their faces one sees the look of a crushed and sullen people. There is also an expression, not of apprehension, but of guilt upon their faces; why, I know not. The bent neck, the heavy lowering features, the shambling gait, the suspicious eye, the low but inharmonious voice, make a strange figure—melancholy, yet somehow not exciting immediate pity, as did the bearing of the poor sore-stricken fellahin of the Euphrates valley, who have borne, and bear, as much as these.

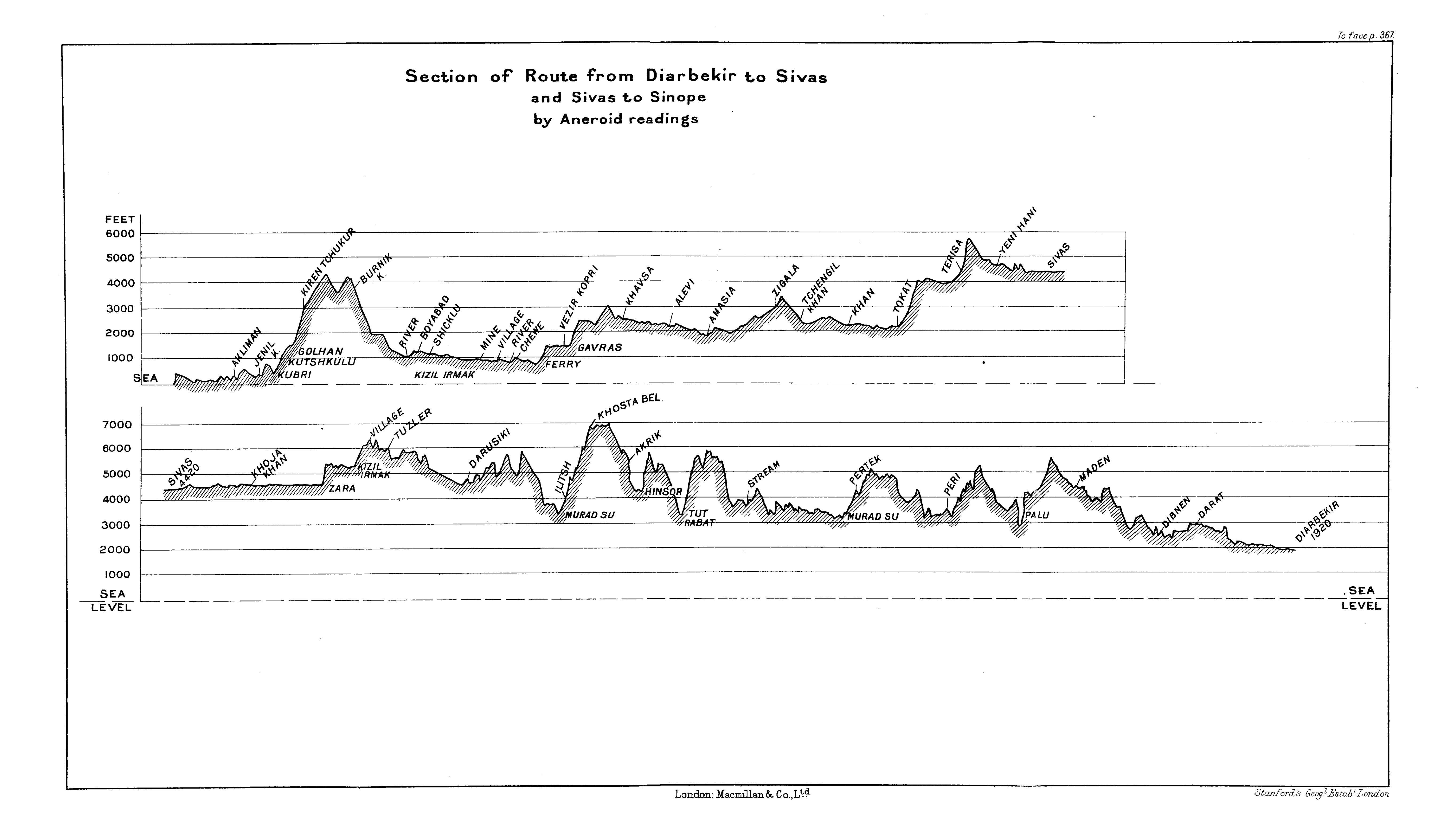
Of Palu I saw, indeed, but little, being engaged the whole afternoon in talk with the Kaimakam, a young Turkish exile. And what foolish talk it was—free press, liberty, and every catch-word of the Babu! The result of a half-baked Frank education is depressing. Ibrahim and Abdur-Rahman Agha talked sense; but these fellows repeat quotations. A free press where no one but officials can read or write! The creature could not see for the life of him that the real trouble was due to the mania of himself and all his peers to become officials, and never to employ themselves in any other way. Aghas and landlords he looked on with contempt, merchants he derided; it was his only ambition to be a Kaimakam. His idea of reform was the regular payment of Kaimakams, the provision of free illustrated newspapers for Kaimakams to read, the building of railways for Kaimakams to travel by, and eventually the restoration of all Kaimakams to Constantinople, where they would be given places as highly-paid deputies in a Parliament of Kaimakams, who would collect and control the expenditure.[1]

From Palu we rode to Peri, passing through a valley full of well-built villages, each surrounded by its lands, and a little park of trees. These villages are inhabited by Armenians and Kurds, who live side by side under the control of Turkish landowners. The Kurds are all Zazas, but are reckoned as Sunnis, having apparently been conquered and forced to

[1] I note with some satisfaction that I wrote these words two years before the establishment of constitutional government.

abandon some other religion which they formerly held. I could find no traces of enmity in the villages between the two races, but my impression on this point was far from clear. At any rate, the Kurds were, equally with the Armenians, a conquered people, and seemed to look with much envy on the independent state of the Dersimli.

At Peri I found that the Kaimakam had departed with all the police, leaving one half-paralysed old gentleman in charge of the post. The population of Peri is partly Turkish and partly Armenian. The first to come to my tents were the Turks, mostly oldish men, who talked of crops, barley, and horses. Presently a voice behind them said, "Guess I can't tark En'lish much," and a dirty man came forward. He had the appearance of a scavenger and the manners of a United States negro; but withal a cheerful creature, and good-natured. He had been working in a factory in America, and had returned to fetch away his family. So long as he remained, so did the Turks; but presently up came three mission teachers—"Class mates from the Euphrates College." The Turks and the factory hand hurriedly left, and these three persons remained. Politics and religion were their only staple commodities. Of the country they knew nothing; information they had none; but their complaints were many, and lying complaints at that. They did not complain of massacre, but of poverty, which the flourishing condition of the surrounding villages belied. Their idea of reform was the establishment of factories. Apparently the feudal system of Bey-landlords could not be improved on, as under a liberal government the Armenians would not cultivate the land. They complained that their fellow-countrymen were ignorant, and did not wish for the luxuries of Europe. This these muddle-heads held to be a fault. Why in the name of goodness must foreigners come to lay waste Armenian brains in this way? Into this land of poetry and ignorance, the ideas of the lowest of Anglo-Saxon savages are held up to adoration —hideous clothes, respectability, and over-eating. Practical hard materialism is the last thing wanted in this land, which only a poet or a saint could reform. When will there come a missionary, with the courage of his opinions, and without a bribe of a free school, or an industry, or money to back him up?




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Stanford's Geog! Estab! London.

This land is waiting for him. He would die a martyr's death; but still he might achieve good instead of working incalculable evil. These half-educated Armenian people never think of the essential, but only of the superficial side of things. To make one fraction of a section of the population of a country desire a number of things they will never be likely to get, is not to work in the cause of true progress. The manufacture of hermaphrodite brains will not procreate a school of native thought.

At Peri I found the remains of a large basilica, the apse of which is still used by the Armenians as a church and has been walled off from the rest of the building, which is now entirely in ruins. There are signs of a central dome of brick, supported by four arches. The walls have evidently been restored and ruined several times, as fragments of carvings and ornaments are to be seen in incongruous places. The foundations are those of some ancient temple, being built of an entirely different style of masonry. Below the foundations there is a tunnel, leading to a crypt containing a spring of very clear water. The church is called Surpteros, and the district surrounding, Surpdigin. My people seemed to feel depressed; so, indeed, did I, in this land of groans and tears. I see no solution to this dreadful Armenian problem. Yet I cannot think it does not exist.

On June 11th we left Pertek. I regret to have to record that I failed in performing my antiquarian duties at Pertek. On riding away, I saw that I had left unvisited an imposing castle of ancient date. However, it was too late to redress the matter, so I was forced to continue on my road. How dull, how dreary, and how dismal was the ride! Eight hours and a half over yellow mountains, full of empty villages belonging to Dersimli tribesmen, who have all departed to their summer quarters. At the spot marked "Tombs" on the map, I found a dolmen-like erection, which I photographed. It was a tomb, but whose no one knew. Anyhow, Kurdish and Armenian women place stones upon it, in order to secure the survival of boy-children born before their time.

At Arquowan I found precisely what I had been seeking—a village composed of Armenians and Kurds, under a Turkish Bey. The Turkish Bey and his brothers wore turbans, European

clothes, and golden watch-chains. Here, I thought, is the real Osmanli at last—over-lord of subject peoples, etc., the nomad conqueror, the military fief, and so on. The Bey was tall, handsome, blue-eyed, and hospitable—a thorough Turk of the best type; but, alas! under cross-examination his ancestry broke down.

"Formerly," he said, "this land belonged to the Christian kings of Roum (Konia), not to the Armenians." (How did he come to know that?) "Afterwards the Persians seized it, then the kings of Roum, then came the Nebi, and things were turned all ways. I only know that in the days of Sultan Selim this country was prosperous under the Persian Shias. Well, Sultan Selim took the country from the Shias, and that was perhaps five hundred years ago. Then Sultan Selim sent a Vizier here, and the Vizier saw that the Kurds wandered up and down, and did not cultivate the land; so he told them either to settle, or to go down to the Jazirah. Some Milli went down the Jazirah, and from them are descended Ibrahim Pasha's tribe. Some went to the Dersim, and they are the Milan. Some settled, and they were our forefathers."

Thus perished another delusion.

The Bey was so companionable and so ready to talk that I ventured to bring the conversation round to the Armenians.

"They are good workers," he said, "but it is a mistake to think they work harder than Moslems. As to that bloodshed and killing ten years ago—well, I will tell you about it. There were bad Armenians who wished to do evil, but they had no real dealings with the people of Kharput and hereabouts. They travelled up and down, trying to make trouble; but for the matter of that, it was very little they could do. The Armenian villagers and townsfolk listened to them, and agreed with them, but would not have done anything by themselves Now there were a lot of wicked Ministers at Constantinople, and for some reason they wished for trouble; therefore they filled the Sultan's mind with fear on account of the Moslems. Now, the Sultan gave an order. What his order was we shall never know; but the ministers turned his words into a command to slay all Armenians. Then came the calling of people into the mosques, and then the killing. Now I and all my family were very much troubled about this matter, for we got the order; so

we all went together to the mosque here, and read the Koran. Now it is written in the Koran that a Moslem must protect his Christian subjects. When we read that chapter, we knew that the order was a lie; and so it comes that not one single soul of the Armenians was killed in any of the eleven villages belonging to my family. That killing was a shameful and beastly thing. *Jehad* is holy and a duty, but not the murder of one's own dependants. God will punish the guilty—He will punish the guilty." So saying, the Bey retired.

From Arquowan to Chemish-gezek took us three and a-half hours. Chemish-gezek is a town of some fifteen hundred houses, prettily situated in a ravine. According to local reports, it was once an enormous city and the seat of a governor, its ancient name being Jemshidabad. There are, indeed, signs of ancient buildings, but none that I could find of any interest. Across the ravine there are also some inaccessible rock-cut tombs. I may note, as a curious fact, that the round arch is in universal use among the native architects. One of the chief beauties of all these mountain towns and villages is the delightful wooded gardens which are laid out between the various houses. The contrast of the green foliage and dappled shades with the bare scorching mountain rocks is delightful, and makes one inclined to laziness.

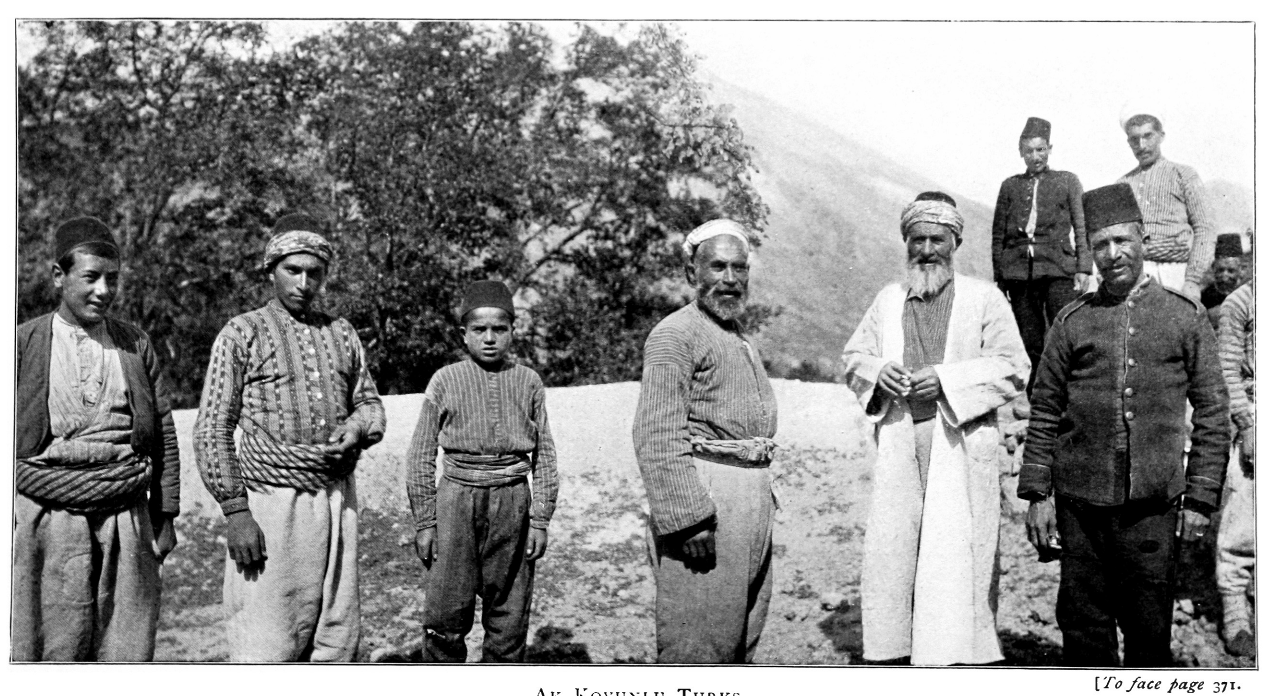
The inhabitants of Chemish-gezek are partly Armenian and partly Turkish. Missionary effort has split up the former into three flourishing and hostile factions, to wit, Greek, Catholic, and Protestant. The Turks I could make little or nothing of, but conclude them to be of the same type as the Bey of Arquowan. How I longed for the loquacity, the gossip and the entertainment of the Arabs of the Jazirah, and the Kurds of Irak! Dull glassy stares and slimy spyings had been my portion since I crossed the Murad Su. One of the obvious curses of the Turkification of the people is the rigid enforcement of the insane veiling customs. Here one sees no more women—only shuffling bundles of clothes, huddling and muffling out of sight. I expect this has much to do with the dulness of these Turkish-speaking people.

We left Chemish-gezek on June 12th, and proceeded by a villainous road to Tut Rabat, a village partly Armenian and

partly Turkish. It is interesting from the fact that it takes its name from five large mulberry trees, the fruit of which is a charitable gift for travellers, being a religious bequest (*wakf*) of some long-dead Agha. The berries being ripe, I found the gift especially seasonable, and blessed the defunct nobleman.

From Tut Rabat we went in a northerly direction, under the shadow of the Munzur Dagh, passing Vartinik, a fine two-mosque village, on our left. This portion of the Dersim border is in the hands of a fine, stalwart, and laborious population. Well-made bridges, embanked roads, mills, granaries, winter rest-houses, carefully built fountains, and deeply-worn caravan tracks, point to a flourishing condition of affairs. Single travellers, unarmed and with full saddle-bags, point to a good condition of public order. Military and police patrols we met frequently, their business being to fend off any possibility of Dersimli raids. One object I saw confirmed the good opinion I had formed of the state of affairs in this small district, and that was the person of an Armenian merchant in European clothes, wearing a gold watch-chain, and carrying an umbrella. He was alone on the high-road, about two hours distant from any village ; yet the sight of my approaching caravan, which, in unsettled districts, fills all comers with fear, gave him no uneasiness, for he did not stop when he saw it, nor attempt to hide amongst the rocks, as is often the habit of solitary travellers south of Diarbekir.

At Avrik I noticed that the people were extremely handsome and intelligent, though showing a more decided Mongol strain than I had yet remarked. The girl-children were really extremely beautiful, and the boys and men fond of good-natured fun, and very capable. European clothes, I am sorry to say, were rather obtrusive, but were still enlivened by red velvet waistcoats, which served to tone up their sombre appearance. These people filled me with curiosity; but I had had so many rebuffs in my racial cross-examinations of late that I hesitated to ask them of what race they were, feeling sure that "Islam," "Sunni," "Osmanli," or some equally exasperating answer would be given. However, I was destined to experience a pleasant surprise. In the course of the afternoon an old gentleman appeared, armed with a muzzle-loading carbine about two feet long. Of this weapon he had a great opinion, and proposed a shooting match.



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AK KOYUNLU TURKS.

Accordingly, a sheet of paper, six inches square, was set up at a distance of *seven hundred yards*, and the old man proceeded to inject powder and balls into his gun. After six misfires, the piece went off with a loud report, and, to my surprise and consternation, the bullet struck the ground within half-a-yard of the target. The noise of the firing prompted others to join in the sport, and soon bullets were skimming over the roofs of the houses, and hissing through the streets, all in the direction of the sheet of paper. Two boys acted as markers, and seemed to think themselves safe at a distance of twenty yards from the target, though occasionally little whorls of dust arose almost at their feet, as the bullets pecked into the earth. However, the shooting on the whole was remarkably good for Turkey, and Gras rifles and ammunition seemed extremely plentiful. I must mention that the men shoot with a rest stick in hand, which is doubtless a reminiscence of the bow.

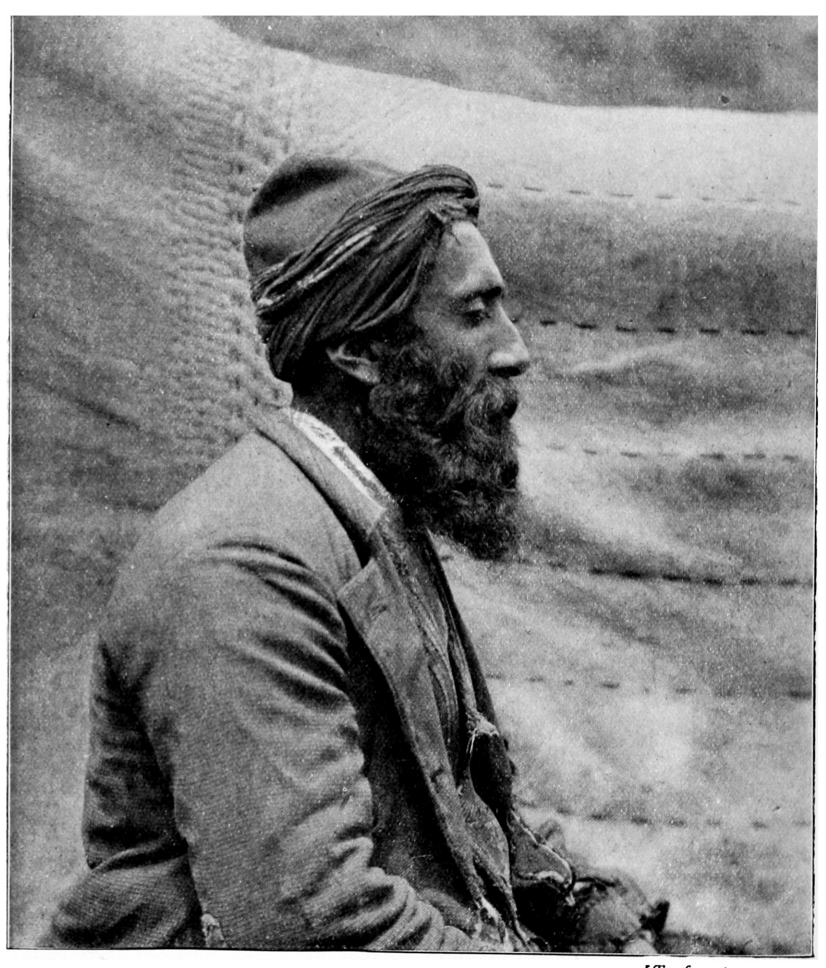
After the match was over, the villagers came to gossip round the door of my tent. After a little general conversation, I turned the subject on to that of racial origins. I asked them if they were Osmanlis. To my surprise, the answer came promptly, "No, we are the Ak Koyunlu Turks of Uzun Hassan." Out came De Guignes and Creasy in a moment—the latter as usual useless, but the periwigged Frenchman absolutely accurate. The chapter giving the history of this famous tribe was corroborated by the villagers, who knew the whole history by heart. They carried me even further, and told me that though an ardent Sunni, their Bey had stood neutral during the war between Selim and the Persians, which was, according to them, a conquest and not a *jehad*. The learned man of the village ventured the opinion that at the time of the introduction of Islam most of the Kurds were idolaters. I find that these Turks intermarry with the Kurds, but not frequently, there being only four Kurdish wives in the village out of about four hundred. However, the people said that many of their girls went out to marry the sedentary Kurds.

Above the village there stands a great mountain named the Munzur Dagh, on the top of which there is a tomb and inscription. I was unable to visit it, as the snow was too deep.

From Avrik we rode to Ilitsh, over the Hosta Bel pass. The scenery was more than uninteresting and dreary, the mountains being dark, colourless and arid. The villages, on the other hand, and the methods of cultivation, increase in elaboration and care. There is absolutely no distinction between the Turkish and Armenian villages, either in form or manner of construction, and in most cases the two peoples live side by side. The situation, however, must be growing more and more intolerable, as the mutual fear and suspicion continue to smoulder and burn beneath the surface. Fifty years of sound education might ameliorate matters, but I cannot see how it will all end. Forcible deportation of one or the other is the only cure I can conceive. The Armenian national revival was a calamity which has not yet reached its catastrophe. Mollahs and missionaries should be put under lock and key before any serious business is undertaken.

From Ilitsh we proceeded, much against my will, to Tut. I had engaged an Armenian to guide me across the Kochkiri mountains, and the man swore he would do so, but started off in the opposite direction. Various specious excuses were made, such as that he was taking a slight detour, and so on ; but after three hours' riding it could no longer be concealed that he had lied from the first, in hopes of deluding us. On the way we passed two wealthy Armenian villages, with well-made roads, fine new houses, and beautifully cultivated gardens. It was obvious that the people were prosperous, yet their appearance was foul and ragged beyond all belief. The most wretched, tattered, verminous scraps of European clothing were their apparel ; old trousers, and frock coats which might have been picked off a dung-hill, were the garments they chose to wear—why I cannot conceive.

At Tut itself the case was the same, though the Moslem villagers, who had a suspiciously Armenian cast of countenance, were somewhat less evil-habited. The old Armenian priest of the village paid me a visit, and stated that his people had always been well-treated, though he admitted that he detested the Moslems. However, his prejudices were equally strong against Catholics and Protestants. On Sunday morning I had an experience which I trust I shall never meet with again.



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KOCH KIRI KURD.

The Armenians were in church, and I was sitting in my tent. Presently a boy in a cope came in, and gave me a towel, which, on being opened, I was horrified to see contained the Sacrament. I made him wrap up the towel, and take it back. The old priest said, lightly, "I did not know you had had breakfast," with a nonchalance that made me shudder.

At Tut I engaged—or rather, Jacob, contrary to my wishes, engaged—another Armenian guide. With prismatic compass and plane table, I extorted from the fellow an undertaking that he would lead me directly across the Kochkiri mountain. He swore he knew the road, and of his own accord pointed with his finger whither I desired to go, so I can vouch that he knew what I meant. Nevertheless, under his guidance, we set out in the directly opposite direction the next morning. I swore, I raved. With a bleating cry, he explained that he was avoiding a steep path, and in two hours that placid, yielding Armenian had conquered me. I was led too far away from the path I wished to follow ever to regain it.

In despair, I rode into a village, where I saw tall, dark, handsome men, who neither stared, nor fawned, nor wished to talk politics. They were Kochkiri Kurds. These people are a distinct and definite race, and resemble no other people I have met, save the Druzes and the Sinaminli of Malatia. Tall, handsome, and rather heavily built, they have features somewhat resembling those which the ancients gave to Jupiter Olympus—full lips, long, broad, and silky beard, a nose aquiline but finely chiselled, large black, soft eyes, straight eyebrows, and high domed forehead. In manners they are obsequiously polite, and wonderfully gentle and submissive in their speech. Their religion is advanced Shiism, their language a peculiar and incomprehensible dialect of Kurdish, not understood by Dersimlis, Diarbekir folk, or Baba Kurds. They trace their origin to the Dersim, whence they reckon to have been driven in ancient times. What is really peculiar is the striking contrast which they form to the Armenians, who, in these parts, are small and unhandsome. It may be noted that the Kochkiri Kurds also form a striking contrast to the Zazas of Dersim, who clearly approach the Yezidis in sharpness of feature and slimness of figure.

The scenery improves greatly once the Euphrates is left behind—trees, broad cultivated valleys, and wooded mountains forming a grateful relief after the bare, gaunt, brown, jagged rocks which we had quitted.

From Tuzler we proceeded to Zara, a small but flourishing town on the banks of the Kizil Irmak. The inhabitants are Greeks, Armenians and Turks, and bear little or no resemblance to the surrounding peasantry.

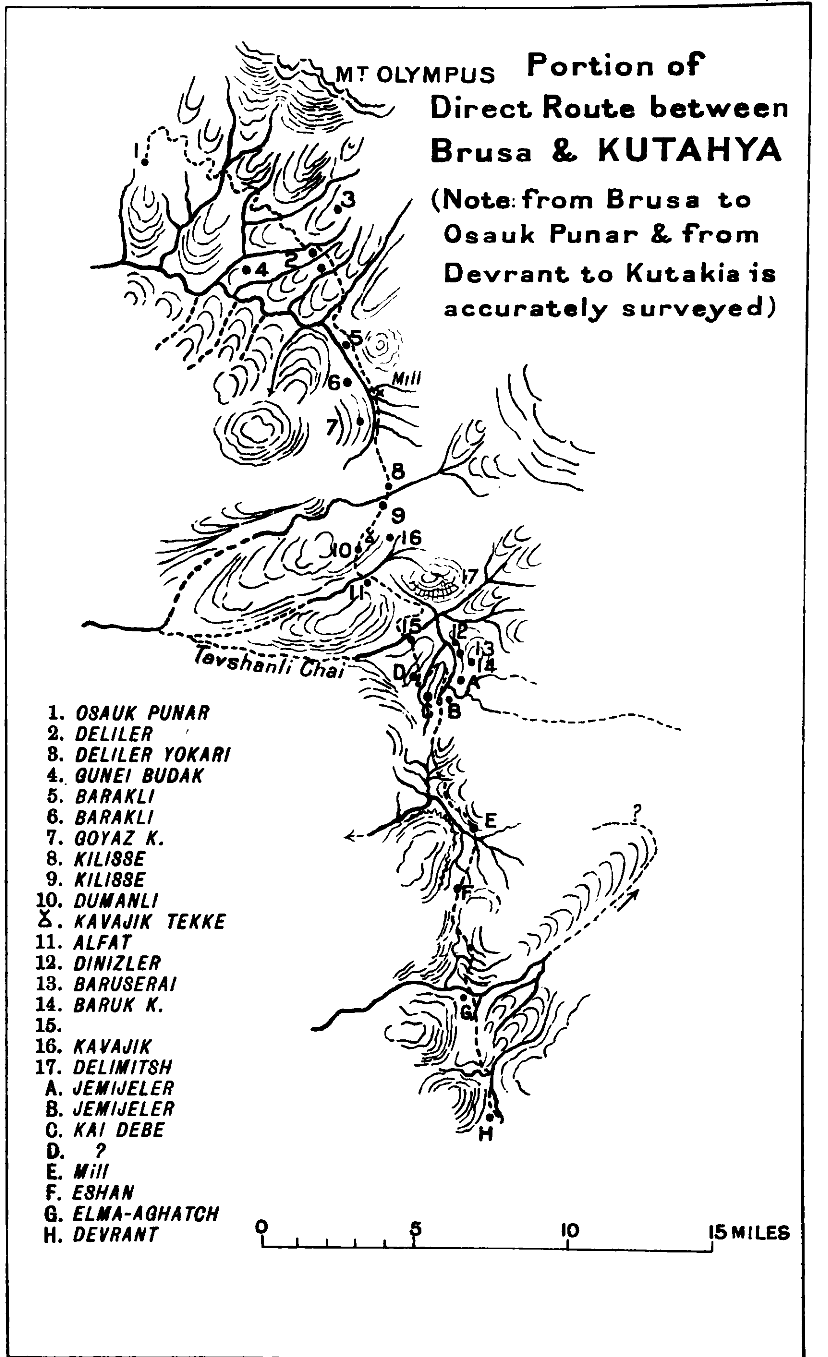
From Zara to Sivas there is a *chaussée* road, which is, however, in considerable want of repair, and although much used, runs through a very sparsely populated country of no interest of any kind whatever. The city of Sivas is disappointing in the extreme, reminding one rather of Van in its lack of cohesion and scattered design.

Of the high road between Sivas and Amasia I cannot pretend to give anything approaching an accurate or careful description. I travelled over it at great speed, and was engaged at the time in some pressing business which almost entirely diverted my attention. The only incident of the road that struck me with any vividness was that while travelling along a piece of broad *chaussée* I met two bullocks, one horse, and some peasants, engaged in dragging a roller about the size of those which are used by our gardeners for the purpose of levelling lawns. Behind this procession marched a strange figure-head, a tall, gaunt, and emaciated man of perhaps thirty years of age, with bright blue eyes, yellow flowing beard and strikingly handsome features.

"Good day, gentlemen," he cried in excellent French. "Here you see Mohammed Paulovitch Bey, Albanian Moslem, in exile; write in your note-books that to-day you have met a man of good education, who can speak Romany, Persian, Kurdish, German, Italian, French, Greek, Hindustani, Arabic, Hungarian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Servian, and Turkish, who is employed as a *chef de brigade*" (here he swept off his *tarbush* in the direction of the lawn roller), "and who is entirely at your service."

Here, I thought, is one who will appreciate and deserves a glass of the best whiskey; and my prognostication was correct. As we lumbered along I saw the lawn roller vanish

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London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. Stanford's Geogl. Estabt. London.

over a hill, and with it one of the most striking personalities I have yet encountered.

The great Baghdad road is now kept in splendid repair and is the highway of a busy and increasing traffic. The country which it traverses is an entirely new land with a mosaic of population almost inextricably mixed. Circassian and Caucasian refugees almost equal in number the Kizilbash and Moslem stocks, who dwell side by side with the Armenians, themselves immigrants of almost recent times. The cities of Tokat and Amasia are gradually increasing in size, and seem far more prosperous than Sivas, which is indeed in a parlous financial condition, £T1 per month being considered a high wage for an Armenian clerk with a mission education.

From Amasia we drove to Khavsa, a delightful little town which derives its importance from the magnificent baths and springs with which nature has blessed it. The largest bath is a complete hydropathic establishment of a somewhat primitive kind, with a doctor, a hotel, and restaurant attached to it for the convenience of visitors. Even now Khavsa is generally crowded with travellers, some of whom come from as far away as Angora to undergo a cure.

From Khavsa we proceeded to Vizier Kiopri, where the last of the Armenians are to be seen. The inhabitants of Vizier Kiopri are sad and depressed, having experienced a brief season of splendour and anticipated prosperity when the city was connected with Sinope by a road and bridge across the Halys (Kizil Irmak). At that time it was expected that Vizier Kiopri would be one of the great markets and transit depôts for the interior, but, alas! the bridge was washed away, and the intrigues of the citizens and merchants of Samsun prevented its ever being repaired. Sinope lost all importance as a seaport, and Vizier Kiopri sank once more into comparative insignificance. The only remarkable edifice in the town is a huge square-domed magazine, reported to have been built by Kara Mustafa. The building, like many of the Ottoman structures, is ponderous but striking and solid, and to my eye more pleasing than the earlier fizigig work of the Seljuks. While in the town I heard a drum and fife thumping and wailing through the streets. I went to the door and there saw passing a procession

of above a hundred peasant boys and men, marching two and two, headed by a green and red flag. Superb fellows they were, tall, stout, and handsome, each fit to be enlisted immediately in the Grenadiers. Yet it was a sad enough sight, for they were recruits for Macedonia: they were being haled away to war, famine, and pestilence, there to be transformed into hungry, wolfish fanatics, to die of weariness, disease, or Bulgarian bullets, though perhaps indeed a few were destined to return home, stricken, battered, and broken, after an absence of many years.

At Vizier Kiopri the mixed elements of the population resolve themselves into still another definite type, which closely resembles that to be found between Angora and Kastamuni, the men being tall, fair-haired and blue-eyed, with occasional relapses to a Mongolian or Turkish strain. The village architecture also changes, and the white stone and lath-and-plaster buildings, which had been the order of the day since we reached Zara, were replaced by log-cabins and heavy wooden structures built with very little regard either for beauty or convenience. Most of the houses are supported on wooden trestles, I presume as a preventative from damp and fevers.

From Vizier Kiopri I set out on the last stretch of my pilgrimage to Sinope. I was obliged for this purpose to engage two Turkish muleteers from Angora, and the serious solemnity with which they stated the outrageous price they claimed as their reward for conveying me to the sea nearly drove me frantic; no Arabian shrieks, no roarings, no cursings would move those handsome and determined old men. Their argument was unanswerable: "We do not wish to go to Sinope. You do. You are rich, you can afford to pay treble the price anyone else can. We will not accept less." After an hour and a half of bargaining, this exasperating story was repeated and I had to give way. No Arab, or Jew, or Armenian could have robbed me thus! There was something of the tough grimness of my own wolds-people which tore from me a reluctant feeling of admiration for those hard-fisted Turks. What was also striking was the fidelity with which they kept to their bargain, for although I had under-estimated the distance to Sinope, and neither of the men had riding-horses of their own, they tramped for forty-three hours on end with only four halts, three of

two hours and one of four hours, and never on the whole line of march did a single murmur escape them. For a moment I got a glimpse of that rugged and indomitable spirit of the Anatolian Moslem which has carried the Turkish Empire through many a disastrous day. To account for it we must find something more reasonable than the fatalistic impress of Mohammedanism, which has left the Syrian and the Egyptian fellah the same frantic, fickle, half-hearted creature he always was.

The road between Vizier Kiopri and Sinope is one that cannot fail to give a mournful impression. All along the valley of the Kizil Irmak there runs a magnificent carriage road ; but it is grass-grown, and the culverts are falling into ruin solely because the great bridge on the Kizil Irmak has never been completed. Were this work only executed it would be one of the busiest high-roads in Turkey, since all the trade of Samsun would be diverted to the safe port of Sinope. But private interest has strong motives in inducing the officials at Constantinople to prevent either the governors of Sivas or Kastamuni from performing the necessary and useful work, and so it comes that Sinope is starved and the money expended on the chaussée has been thrown away. It is said, however, that before long the influence of the Vali of Sivas will outbalance that of the Armenian merchants of Samsun.[1]

[1] Five years of constitutional government and progress have not altered matters.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANATOLIA

AT Sinope my wife joined me and henceforward this record must be regarded rather as a collaboration than the work of a single hand.

The town of Sinope itself is extremely picturesque and beautiful. Situated as it is on a narrow isthmus, it appears designed by nature to be a large and flourishing seaport ; but owing to the isolation of the city from the great Baghdad road, there is but little trade afoot, and if anything, business is rather declining than increasing from year to year. At any moment, however, Sinope might assume great importance, and traders would do well to keep an eye on the township.

The inhabitants of Sinope are supposed to be partly Greek and partly Turkish, though in appearance they are all identical, the prevailing type being almost Neapolitan in regularity of feature and complexion. The Mongolian cast of countenance is completely absent, though fair hair and blue eyes are not rare but somewhat uncommon.

The only use to which Sinope is at present put by the Ottoman government is that of a depôt for exiles and prisoners. On the city wall there is a large barrack, and in it are confined no fewer than 950 criminals. It was my good fortune to be allowed to inspect this establishment, and the visit proved interesting enough. At the gate of the prison we were met by a pallid young Bey of about 30 years of age, who, it appeared, was the governor of the gaol. He led us to a rickety door or wooden wicket where three aged *zaptiehs* stood at the "Present." Beyond this door there was a flimsy iron railing, closed by



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BOY WITH A CROSS BOW AT SINOPE.

a sliding bolt, which separated us from a large open courtyard wherein stood the majority of the 950 criminals. The gate was thrown open, and we entered accompanied by the governor and an ancient man with a light stick in his hand. The prisoners were all at liberty and appeared no different from the ordinary crowd which is continually surging to and fro over the Galata bridge — Albanians, Circassians, Moslems, Christians, Kurds, Armenians, three Greek priests, several khojas and a variety of Syro-Phoenician nondescripts. I looked in vain for the gaunt and pallid faces one associates with confinement in an unwholesome spot, but I could not find them, and the men looked just the same as any others you might see in the bazaars.

From the courtyard we proceeded to inspect the various barrack rooms—for cells and dungeons, apparently, there were none. The rooms were naturally dirty, but no dirtier than many *khans* I have slept in. They were crowded with the effects of the inmates, saratoga trunks, bundles of clothing, baskets, beds, and little chairs ; and from my knowledge of the average man I can say that the presence of these objects was a crowning mercy, for when I saw them I thought of the furtive instinct which prompts the most docile English soldier to conceal a Pears' soap advertisement in the bottom of his canteen, or to hide a shell box from Margate in the back of his valise, in spite of the most sulphurous orders and admonitions to the contrary. Near the sleeping rooms on the staircase there was a large cookshop and café, the appearance of which was brightened by a row of well-polished *narghilehs* that the prisoners might hire from the keeper of the kitchen.

When we came out of the rooms I began to look with curiosity for some signs of restraint; and my surprise was increased to amazement when I was at last convinced that the 950 cut-throats, brigands, robbers, and other miscreants had no other guardians than five police with rifles, and eighteen decrepit old men with sticks. Further, I was informed that nearly all the prisoners were armed with knives, but that very few had revolvers. Another point in which the prison differed from other penal establishments was that each evening about twenty or thirty of the prisoners were released to go and cater for the others in the town, and that it was within the governor's

province to grant permits to live in the town for such as wished to work as masons, carpenters, or porters—men who obtained such permits being obliged to report themselves once a week.

While I was at Sinope I had several interviews with a young Circassian Bey who had been exiled for being on the Committee of the Young Turk Party. His account of his trial and conviction was interesting. The whole evidence against him consisted of his being in the possession of certain newspapers printed in Switzerland. His trial, he told me, was protracted for several days, and carried out in a very formal and correct manner; the judges listened with apparent impartiality to all the witnesses and prisoner had to say. In his opinion all the stories of bullying, torture, and brutal interrogation were absurd fabrications, for, as he said, the trial was a mere matter of form, and the conviction and sentence rested not with the judges but with others. The only direct injustice he complained of in his case was that he was compelled to engage an Armenian advocate. His sentence was delayed for four years, which were spent in the central gaol at Constantinople. Of his confinement he was ready enough to talk, and made very little complaint as to the treatment he received; though he said that imprisonment at Constantinople was far more severe than elsewhere, the chief hardship being the complete isolation from friends, who were not allowed to visit and converse with the prisoners, as elsewhere. After four years' delay he was found guilty and exiled to Sinope, which he found a pleasant enough spot; and as the new Mutesarrif was a countryman of his, he enjoyed considerable freedom from petty annoyance and supervision.

From Sinope we rode through boggy forests to Ayunjik, a new town, the seat of a Kaimakam, where there are three slips for the building of large sailing vessels of about 600 tons. On July 11th we sailed for Istifan by coastguard boat, whose captain (a Laz) naturally smoked contraband.

From Istifan we proceeded by horse to Ayundun, a large village situated in a broad deep valley. The whole of the route passed through a country which is being gradually cleared of forest and put under cultivation. In several of the villages we noticed classic remains, such as broken columns, altars, and so on, but could detect no signs of inscriptions.



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HOUSE NEAR AYUNDUN.

In the evening we were visited by the old Bey of the village, a handsome old gentleman with the fine aquiline features and shapely build which distinguishes the Kastamunian squirearchy from the peasantry. His account of his surroundings was interesting. Christians and Moslems lived side by side in peace and quiet, he said, and there was no distinction of language or race between them. He himself was descended from a Seljukian chief, and his forefathers had formerly been Dere Beys over all the district of Ayunjik. In Sultan Mahmud's time they had done all the government business, collected the taxes, administered justice, and in war time led the troops of the locality to serve under the Sultan; but all that was past history. Within the last fifty years there had been much progress, the villages had, roughly, doubled in number, and more land was being brought under cultivation each year. The export wood tax was 60 *paras* on 200 *okes* (about 3¼*d.* on 565½ lbs.); but this was not sufficient to kill trade with Russia, which was flourishing. Taxes were heavy, and heaviest of all the tax in men—of a hundred who went away not more than fifty returned alive. As he talked of military service, the old man sighed and looked so extremely sorrowful that I wondered how many of his sons had been sacrificed.

At Ayundun we at last prevailed on our guides to take us in a direction which approximated a little more closely to that of Kastamuni than the one we had followed up to then. The spot at which we camped was named, or at least was said to be named, Tami Bel, and the ride thither is well worth describing, if indeed words or photographs could give but a distant reflection of the beauties of nature. We started by climbing a precipitous ascent of some 2000 feet, where our road lay through a dense forest of magnificent elms, birch, beech, maples, and sycamores; but after we had ascended 3000 feet the green-leafed trees gave way entirely to pines, which from the summit of Tami Bel spread out south, east, and west in one immense unbroken forest. The contrasts of that woodland scenery are most wonderfully striking. At times the huge boughs and mossy trunks bar one in a green prison of restricted dimensions, in which one's eyes and ears are naturally attracted to the minute and adjacent—the faint twitterings of unseen

birds, the splashing of little brooks, the gentle rustling and breathing of the leaves, the small shrill hum of insects ; for things of no note in open spaces become apparent and charming in the close confines of a brake. Hardly have one's eyes accustomed themselves to such surroundings, however, than the forest falls away before an open clearing on the mountain-side, and the grandiose stretch of awful distance takes the place of delicate proximity. The mountains tower above to the very heavens, dark and sinister in their cloak of solemn pines, through which bare, seared, and jagged rocks rear themselves like angry Titans petrified in the act of scaling Olympus. Far below, the valleys are chequered by the grovelling works of impish men—a house a dot, a village a warren, a field, a chessman's station ; while away, beyond a level with some lower but still mighty ranges of mountains, stretches the dull grey curtain of smooth and treacherous sea, its horizon so lost amidst a soft haze that its surface seems extended to infinity.

After passing the night at Tami Bel we set out in a south-westerly direction, mounting, mounting, and still mounting, until we reached a summit some 6,500 feet above the sea which we had left the day before. From that altitude we began at last to descend, and in four hours had left the forest and emerged into the open country. Hitherto all the villages which we had seen had been composed of log huts of the rudest description ; but now we entered a region where neatly whitewashed houses, carefully fenced fields, stoutly built mills and cleanly little mosques replaced the rough dwellings to which we had grown accustomed, though the general appearance and dress of the people remained the same.

The population north of Kastamuni is a little mixed in looks. The men and women tend to be unhandsome ; but on the coast one may sometimes come across a whole village of beautiful people whose cast of countenance distinctly approaches the ideal of the ancient Greek, though curiously enough such people as often as not call themselves Turks. However, there is one point of interest to be noted in the fact that the Beys bear no resemblance whatever to the villagers, with whom apparently they have never intermarried. These nobles are big-nosed, high cheek-boned, beetle-browed, deep-voiced, solemn men.

From Tami Bel we rode over the Ovadjik Pass to the valley of the Geuk Irmak, and thence to Kastamuni. On the way we met five unveiled women who said they were nomad Armenians from Bozabad, where there were forty tents. Kastamuni people say that they are gypsies, but this seems improbable; they cannot at any rate talk Kurdish. In appearance they might have passed for Hamawand.

The most beautiful city perhaps in all northern Asia Minor, Kastamuni is but little visited by Europeans. Isolated from the rest of the world by forests and high mountains, massacres, events, wars, and demonstrations pass over the sleepy hollow unheard and unthought of. Its Armenians talk Turkish, and though somewhat aggressive do not plot, for there is no Mission Station to breed discontent with that half-baked education which is worse than ignorance. Its Greeks are less Greek than elsewhere; its Moslems gentle, simple, and kind. The beauty and charm of the city lie not in any particular building but rather in the general harmony of the whole. Leaden domes and graceful minarets rise amidst dark green gardens, while the houses—many of which resemble, and are as beautiful as, the manors of the time of Henry VII.—form streets which for his reputation an artist ought to paint. The shattered red walls of the overhanging citadel, and the yellow hills of the valley in which the city is built, throw the beauties of the town into greater relief than would any other imaginable background.

Murray's guide-book has condemned Kastamuni as a home of fanaticism, owing to the numerous *tekkes* of dervishes and schools of orthodox clergy to be found in the town; but truly there was never a more silly libel, for in Kastamuni, where the tourist and superior person are unknown, "Franks" are received with open arms, patted on the back, feasted, cheered, and welcomed. It was our chance to inspect every mosque of note in the city, and a brief description of each would perhaps not be amiss.

First we visited the great white mosque at the south end of the city. Without, it is a pleasing enough building; within, repulsively bare, save for the ornamentation of the *mihrāb*. The mosque is said to have been built by Sultan Ismail-ibn-Isfandiar somewhere in the fifteenth century. It has, however, one treasure

—and that a strange one—in the shape of a handsome brass reliquary of French or English make of the fourteenth century, which is now used as a chandelier. Neither the khoja nor any of the servants of the mosque has the remotest notion as to how it came into their possession. Outside the mosque there is the tomb of the mother of the founder of the main building, and a small bath built for the poor. In the centre of the city the Ulu Jami, or "great mosque," is of modern construction, being about eighty years old; it is a creditable enough building, but of little or no peculiar merit. Opposite stands a fine covered court with two refreshingly noisy fountains. On the north side of the town there are three mosques of importance: the Shabanweli, which contains a finely carved chair; the Agai Imaret, which is decorated with a Seljukian door similar to the ones at Sivas; and the *tekke* of the Kadri dervishes. In this last there is a magnificent silken banner, about three hundred years old, with a minutely worked inscription woven over the whole. The dervishes also show a peculiar steel mirror of great antiquity, which is reputed to have medicinal properties and to cure the headaches and neuralgic pains of those who gaze into it. However, there is certainly no attempt at fraud or at deceiving those who use it, as the dervishes lay no great store by the article and make no particular boast of its virtues.

While we were examining these trinkets the chief Shaykh asked us whether we would like to attend their *zikr* on Friday night. Naturally we jumped at the invitation, and on the appointed evening appeared at the mosque, where we found a little divan prepared for us and coffee waiting. After coffee we were led into the interior of the mosque, where a cane chair and velvet music stool had been prepared for us in a little balcony overlooking the floor of the building, upon which some thirty men were seated in a circle. Two were wandering dervishes, the rest ordinary people of the town, save for the Shaykhs of the mosque, who were draped in black. The ceremonies began with the chanting of various chapters of the Koran in a deep sonorous bass. After the chants came a pause, when four chanters began singing other chapters with the usual quaverings and modulations, while the remainder began to repeat slowly

the words "La illaha ila' llah." This continued perhaps for some twenty minutes, the time growing gradually faster and the note proportionally higher. Suddenly the Shaykh of the *tekke* stepped into the centre of the circle and set a faster pace, which quickly resulted in a kind of hoarse coughing bark. This awful sound was prolonged with increasing violence for thirty minutes by the clock, one Shaykh after another leading the time. Meanwhile various persons who had been watching slipped into the circle and joined in the chorus. At last the pace became so fast and furious that the dervishes who had been kneeling began actually to rise upon their heels and move gradually towards the centre of the mosque. Just as a climax was apparently imminent, the Shaykh in the centre buried his face in his hands and all were instantly silent. The eldest of the dervishes then began the recitation, in broken literary Arabic and Turkish, of an extempore prayer which included nearly every person of importance in the Ottoman Empire, beginning with the Padishah and ending up with the Vekil Commander Pasha. The prayer having ended, we were invited by the chief Shaykh to ices and coffee in the divan, where we were soon joined by the more select of the company.

That the Kadri dervishes are fraudulent impostors I am prepared to deny with some heat; Shaykh Saleh, I would remind the reader, was of the same sect. The *zikr*, peculiar as it may appear to us, is only a mechanical means of attaining an end, namely complete abstraction from worldly thoughts and an intense contemplation of the unity and omnipotence of God—the two divine attributes to which the pious Moslem pays the greatest attention. Curiously enough, it is this that essentially divides the Moslem from the Christian, whose ideas are usually directed to the mercy and goodness of God. The Kadri dervishes do not pose in any way as workers of miracles, though such acts are often attributed to them. The *tekkes* are in the hands of certain families directly related to that of the founder of the order, and it would be impossible for any but themselves to conduct a Kadri *zikr*, although anyone may be affiliated to the order if he so desires.

From Kastamuni we set out (on July 21) to explore the country lying between that city and Tosia, and thence to

Osmanjik. For about five miles' radius round Kastamuni there is a zone of densely populated and carefully cultivated lands. The villages are well-built, the rivers are spanned by rude but commodious bridges, the fields are tilled and tended with the greatest pains. This cultivated area joins on to the valley of the Geuk Irmak, where one finds a broad band of well cultivated country running all the way to Bozabad. Five hours' ride eastward, however, brought us once more into the rich pine forests of the Ilkaz Dagh range, through which we passed by way of the Kara Dere, a somewhat narrow valley containing a few villages and many saw mills. The country seems fairly prosperous, though the people complain bitterly of the number of men carried off to the Yemen, never to return. The inhabitants are of a very mixed type in which it is impossible to identify any particular characteristic.

After many windings the Kara Dere brings one to a *chaussée* near Chaban, which begins abruptly in a side valley. As the slopes of the Ilkaz grow steeper, the forests grow more and more dense until at last, at the summit of the pass, the woods close right on to the road. Five hours' descent brings one to the small town of Tosia, in which there is nothing remarkable. The exterior of the great mosque raises high hopes which are completely dashed by the hideous painting within, which gave pain even to the khoja in charge of the building.

The great valley which separates Kastamuni from the *vilayet* of Angora should, of course, be the line followed by a light railway. Rice, grapes, wheat, oats, barley, maize, opium, and hemp are the crops grown in it with the greatest success. The people, who face fever to devote their lives to the development of this remarkable valley, are extraordinarily industrious and leave no device untried to extract as much as possible from the soil. Aqueducts, wooden syphons, pumps, and primitive turbines are to be seen in every village; while the neat banks, dams, and dykes used to irrigate the fields point to an intelligence and inventiveness hardly to be expected among a people whose only market is local, and whose output is harassed at every turn by taxes and lack of communication.

Once the Kastamuni border is crossed, however, and the ascent of the Chatal Hobak commenced, the scene immediately



TOSIA.

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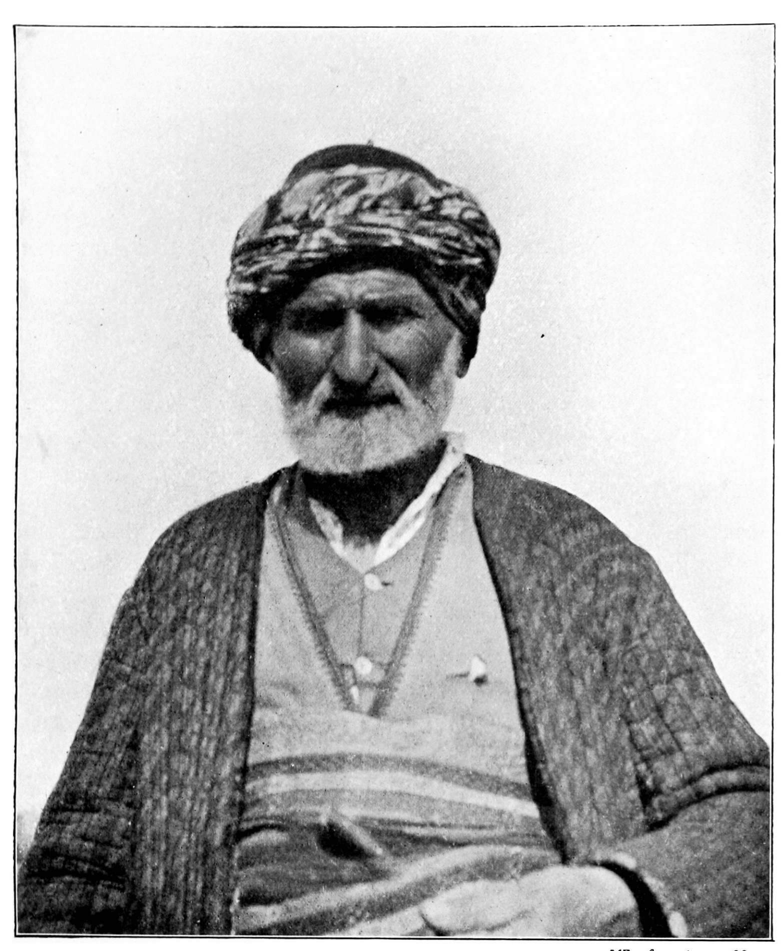
changes. By all the laws of God and man the traveller should enter a magnificent forest of huge pines; but owing to the chuckle-headed folly of a government department, all that is to be seen is the terrible wreck of a once mighty woodland. For ten hours the traveller may ride without stopping through acres and acres of burnt trees, dead trees, murdered trees, skeletons of trees, worm-eaten trunks, masses of dead wood and tinder not even fit to make into charcoal. As he looks upon this dismal spectacle he beats his brains to find some reason for this crazy and insane destruction. There amidst this desert of dead forest he sees poor, miserably poor, hovels, in which live a wretched half-starved race of beings, who dully plough the barren earth and reap amidst the empty clearings crops so poor in grain and straw as hardly to be worth the cutting. Indeed a cry of impotent anger escaped me when I looked upon the sight. Why were these poor people not wealthy woodmen; why were they not engaged at good wages, like those we had seen upon the coast, in cutting, sawing and carting timber; why were they doomed to toil and sweat amidst a famine almost permanent—for that pine-forest land can never be made to bear a reasonable crop? No one could gain by this mad wrecking—no corruption, no bribery of Pashas, no villainy even as yet unheard of, could explain or be the motive for such a crime as this, and yet the thing was so. The answer came pat from a poor peasant's lips. "You see, sir," he said, "the government cannot tax trees, but every field of grain pays a tax. So we may not cut green wood for sale, but there is a permission to burn or clear away trees for agricultural work, and the poor grain we cultivate is just sufficient to feed us and our beasts." There is the explanation. When I heard it and looked at the lost millions lying in white sticks, blackened stumps and rotting trunks upon the ground, I wished I could have at least five minutes' conversation with the Minister of Forests.

The government official's view of the situation was given by the officer of police who accompanied us from Tosia: "The villagers in these parts are well-off and make a great deal. The tax is one-tenth taken after they have gathered in their harvest. The forests are better preserved than they were ten years ago; where there was then only one officer

to oversee them, there are now three. The villagers are allowed green wood only for the purpose of building houses, but as much dead wood to burn as they want. The soldiers sent from here to the Yemen have all come back; in six months they got used to the climate of the Yemen. The people here are contented; they have no money, but they have food and clothes, they eat meat once a fortnight and live quietly. They all do their military service and do not try to escape. There is talk of a railway extension from Angora when the Hejaz Railway is finished. The people like being taxed, they don't want any money. It does not kill the trees to hack large pieces out of them. The villagers will go and work on the Hejaz Railway for six months or a year, but will not go there to colonise. They don't want to make money and grow rich."

On the top of the Chatal Hobak I found an encampment of the Yederli Turkomans, who had also fallen victims to this mania for enforcing the cultivation of barren land. The top of the Chatal Hobak is only free of snow three months and a half in the year; during those months it is magnificent downland affording superb grazing for Angora goats and fat-tailed sheep. The brevity of the season and the thinness of the soil forbid cultivation; but the lunatic who burns forests will not hesitate to ruin a wealthy shepherd. So, after 400 years of peaceful occupation, the Turkomans have been forbidden to return there again, and some bowed-backed, broken-hearted villagers will be driven by taxes to plant some sprigs of barley, which can in turn be taxed, and so on *ad infinitum*.

From Chatal Hobak we rode down through sparse forest and scrub oak into Osmanjik in the valley of the Kizil Irmak. This depression forms an unpleasing contrast to the high, cool, tree-clad mountains through which we had been passing. A burning, fever-stricken valley, dry and dusty from the heats of July, enclosed by black, rugged and colourless mountains, presents but few attractions at three o'clock in the afternoon; and though some may admire the transitory glories of the merciful sunset, I cannot pretend to have experienced any other feelings than those of satisfaction in knowing that my sojourn in the district would not be prolonged.



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TURCOMAN AT CHATAL HOBAK.

The town of Osmanjik itself is but small, and derives its sole importance from the durability and usefulness of its bridge, which is the only one connecting Samsun with Kastamuni and Tosia. The bridge itself is a magnificent work, and from its grace and solidity may be judged to be the work of the earlier Osmanli Sultans, whose architectural labours have a character which is to me far more pleasing than that of the vaunted mosques of the Seljuks. In Osmanjik there is to be seen a mosque lately built by the inhabitants, the device and design of a local architect. It is a handsome little building, simple, artistic, and adequate. Its builder, like the master-masons of Aleppo, had never been stricken by bad education, and consequently his work was neither offensive nor unpleasing. It has always struck me as strange indeed that few writers should have noted the evil effects of what, speaking superficially, one might term the Europeanisation of Orientals. So far as Turkey is concerned the people whom we choose to term Orientals are the results of a long series of historical events; they have been subject to many wars and disasters, and have been cut off completely from the influence of mediaeval Christianity, the Renaissance, and the French Revolution—the trinity which is the basis, support, and at the same time the essence of what we choose to call western culture. Many persons are inclined to judge harshly as retrogressive and stationary people who have not been born and bred under the same conditions as themselves. The London grocer is apt to imagine that the London pickpocket is his moral and intellectual inferior, rather by innate wickedness than chance or fate; the American journalist wonders at the primitive methods of his ancestors; and perhaps the missing link starts with surprise at the length of the tail of the marmozet. In the same way the traveller in Turkey will make use of expressions suggesting his sage conviction that the whole of the 18 *vilayets* are inhabited by fools, save of course the Greeks of Smyrna and the Armenians who have travelled abroad or been raised in Mission Stations. This most mischievous and dunder-headed opinion is, I regret to say, held not only by occasional visitors, but also by others whose long sojourn in the East has not yet eradicated the

prejudices of Clapham and the dogmas of Brixtonian respectability. It is more regrettable that this should be the case, since, owing to the error, many mistake for progress and intellectual capacity an imperfect mimicry, while signs and indications of possible fertility are passed unheeded.

From Osmanjik we set out across the mountains for Khavsa. The first day we travelled along the Mersivan *chaussée*, a route of little interest or note, the only sight which made any impression on me being two small encampments of Tirikan and Milli Kurds. Poor little lost sheep they seemed to me with their skimpy tents and tattered clothes, a worthy lesson in the vicissitudes which nomads undergo in history. If they but knew, these poor tent-dwellers are a part of the two most powerful and fiercely independent tribes in the Ottoman Empire, the scourge of Valis and the terror of Kaimakams. Although these wretched wanderers know nothing but poverty, unrest and military service, the hospitable old tribal ways still cling to them—"Dismount and pass the night," and "These tents are yours." But the land is growing crowded; one by one the tents in Anatolia will grow less; the old tongue is even now forgotten, and thirty years will perhaps see their women completely veiled (the *yashmak* has reached the chin already), and the men toiling away to grow taxed grains to pay for the supertaxation of fields twice doubly taxed.

The night we spent at a nameless mosque, which fulfilled the functions of a kind of rural club. On a Friday afternoon the elders of the neighbourhood come from each village in ones and twos, pass away the hour of mid-day prayer, chat of crops with the incumbent, sip tea and coffee throughout the afternoon, and towards sundown pray again and then turn homewards. The institution throws some little light on the unconscious brotherhood of Islam. To gather together to admit the existence of God, to pass half a day in peaceful gossip, and then to depart informally is a gleam of social religion most admirable to me. Of course, such wild fanaticism is really damnable to many; but as the khoja of the mosque put the building at my disposal to stop in, to eat pig in for aught he knew—well, my mind was warped, and I could not somehow bear in mind the fact which all my Constantinopolitan friends were ever endeavouring

to impress upon me, namely, that in his inmost heart every Moslem desires the blood of every Christian. Even I forgot those musty maxims touching on the depth of Turkish hypocrisy. Byzantium, its cackle and its influence are far away and most ridiculous on the Tavshan Dagh ; yet in truth I am myself half perverted when within its coils of fatal misunderstanding.

The following day we entered the Tavshan Dagh and commenced a gradual but prolonged ascent which led us from a dusty harvest to fields of unripe corn, thence to a scrub-oak forest, and still higher at last brought us to a mountainous grassland on the summit, named Otti Kilisse, whither numbers of shepherds had brought their flocks from the plains. A little further on we reached the highest valley where there is a Circassian village named Evebuk. Here, as elsewhere, the Circassians were discontented and rapacious, their women beautiful, the men simian.

Like the Yezidis and Armenians, the Circassians are another race with whom I cannot sympathise. The English view that because they build houses with a higher pitched roof and wear tweed trousers, therefore they must be more civilised than their neighbours, does not commend itself to me. My experience of Circassians has taught me that they are a hard, obstinate, commercial race of brave but ruthlessly cruel rogues. They detest agriculture as does the Armenian, but like him their greed for gain makes them good farmers so long as nothing better offers. However, horse-coping, highway robbery, contraband running, employment as *cavasses* or *coljis* or other licensed scamps who plague the Ottoman Empire, soon tempts them to more rapid if less honest means of earning money. They teem in the Civil Service and flock into the army, where the female influence of their daughters in various high harems soon gains them promotion. It must be added, however, that the Circassians of noble origin are honourable and honest, though they do not produce many men of great or commanding intellect.

From Urenek we were led by a devious route down to Khavsa, and I at last discovered why it was that five great *chaussées* joined at this place. It seems that Memduh Pasha, the Minister of the Interior, was the proprietor of one of the

baths there, and consequently all roads leading from the south to Samsun which do not pass through the town have been blocked. The rent of Memduh's bath is £T2,000 per annum. Owing to this outrageous piece of jobbery Ladik, the proper transit city, has been ruined and stands with half-built houses and grass-grown-streets, while Khavsa is increasing in size daily.

From Khavsa we rode to Ladik, over rolling hills partially cultivated and partly young forest of mixed trees, which if given a reasonable chance will prove fine woodland. For the reasons already given the town of Ladik is a failing place, though once of some importance. It contains one fine mosque of great beauty, built by Ahmed Kioprilu in the reign of Mohammed IV., in the seventeenth century. The interior has been ruined by atrocious painting, but the proportions are so fair and just that even from within the effect is not displeasing. At Ladik there is an uninteresting tomb of a Rufai dervish, and the semi-idiot who had charge of the shrine exhibited a rusty toy sword of the early 'eighties as a great relic and antiquity. Near the great mosque there is a library containing a quantity of ancient books rotting with age and neglect. The surly and ignorant khoja whose shame it is to have charge of the college could barely read, but he produced a magnificent Koran with illuminations the size and beauty of which would make a collector's fingers itch for a pair of scissors and five minutes' solitude. Another exhibit of Ladik was a lump of stone with a hole in it, concealed and guarded with care in the Municipal School; this was said to be a lion of fierce countenance lately discovered by masons digging for old stones.

At Ladik the population changes entirely. Fair-haired people with good manners vanish and are replaced by dark-skinned surly, insolent men, who give no sign of welcome and only stare and gape rudely. The whole district is filled with emigrants, Georgians and Lazes, both apparently but poor acquisitions to the state.

From Ladik we rode to Testek, passing the lake of rushes, and at the head of the depression containing it we struck the unknown *chaussée* from Hereke. This is a fine, well-made road, on the whole apparently in good repair; but it is little used except for the transport of tobacco from the vicinity of Niksar.

At Testek we found a settlement of Georgian refugees who had been made Mudirs and local government officers at the expense of the local Turkish gentry—a good example of the policy of the methods of the Byzantine clique, who, in my opinion, dread and hate the Turkish-speaking Moslem more than the Armenians. The Georgian Mudir was a poor creature, shy, rude, and obsequious; his desire to please was pathetic, and a brisk altercation and cross-examination to which he was subjected by a peasant made me imagine that his bed was by no means one of roses.

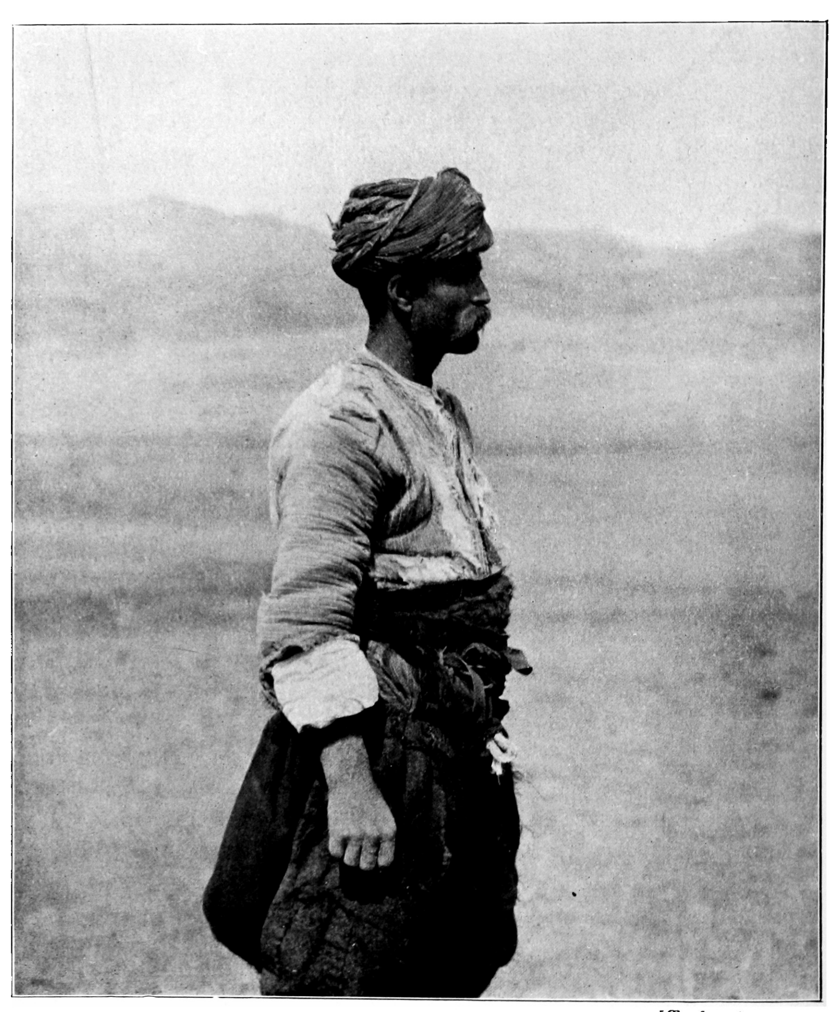
From Testek we rode down the nameless valley which drains its waters into the Yeshil Irmak, passing on our way Sunisa, where buildings of the Seljukian period combined with Roman columns indicate an ancient city of some importance. All along the valley the people were of the same type as those of Ladik—dark, short, and of a low Greekish type. The men had almost wholly adopted the Georgian costume and headdress, and turbans and white cottons were no longer to be seen.

After passing Sunisa, we descended into the broad low plain of Hereke, where swamps and stinging insects make August hideous. After crossing the rickety wooden bridge which spans the Yeshil Irmak, we entered the great gorge which runs to the sea. The pass is extremely narrow and is closed at night by a wooden gate—the villagers say, in order to prevent their cattle straying; but I should imagine the custom dates from some very early period. A little way up the pass one comes very suddenly upon the castle and village of Boghaz Kessen Kiopri. The castle is, I think, obviously one of those constructions raised in the days of the Dere Beys, probably on the site of some Byzantine fortress. The last owner ruled Hereke in the days of Sultan Mahmud, and was dispossessed by that misguided monarch in order that his successors might replace the noble by frock-coated and effeminate peculators or alien refugees. The villagers were merry and communicative, handsome, tall and dark, with fine features, resembling no others I have yet seen.

From the castle we turned northwards and entered that great unnamed range which shuts off the Black Sea from the interior of Anatolia (I suggest that it was this geographical feature, combined with the Taurus, which so completely cut off

the Phrygians and earlier inland peoples from the sea). Three hours' ride brought us to the *yaila* of the village. At Constantinople the learned will inform you that *yaila* means in Turkish the summer quarters of a nomad tribe, and the speculative will tell you how the restless instinct of the Turk still drives him at certain seasons to abandon his house, or "wooden tent," to go to his *yaila*. The theory that Osman and his 500 followers exterminated some 1,800,000 people and bred another 1,800,000 in a century or so, all with strong but slightly repressed nomadic instincts, is enticing but hardly tenable. A *yaila* is in truth a collection of summer houses on a mountain top, whither proceed a moderate percentage of villagers for four months in the year to fatten their flocks on the luxuriant pasture and to till some half-dozen fields which would otherwise remain uncultivated. This must have been a custom imposed by nature on the inhabitants of the feverish plains and valleys from remote antiquity, and indeed both man and beast would perish were it not observed. That the inhabitants of North Anatolia have no nomadic instincts is readily proved by the fact that the people of one valley do not even know the names of the hamlets in the adjoining district.

From Chatalan Yailassi we rode through a splendid forest of superb beech and oak trees. Here the great nobles of the mountain sides had been left in peace, for the country is so isolated, the population is so sparse and scattered, and communications are so difficult, that the government has not had the hardihood to undertake the work of destruction which it prosecutes elsewhere. A journey of six hours brought us to a village on the mountain of Karakush. I noticed that as we proceeded deeper into the forest the villages ceased to be compact and became scattered collections of huts spread over an area of two or three square miles. From this curious custom several peculiarities take their rise, and nomenclature of points, places, and features becomes extraordinarily vague—"Hassan's *yaila* in the government of Karakush near the valley of the mosque" being the kind of indication the traveller receives as to the name and position of a village. In the government of Karakush there may be ten *yailas* in which lives a man called Hassan; there are at least six valleys with isolated mosques



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CASTAMUNI PEASANT SHOWING GALLIC TYPE.

in them; and left and right depend entirely on the mental picture in the speaker's eye. Further, the same place may be called by some other inhabitant, "The wood-clipping place of Arif Effendi right in the government of Karakush," or by another, "The good *yaila* in the forest." The people have by no means the appearance of hardy mountaineers, and although they are not exactly brutalised by isolation, on the other hand they have but little of the grace or charm of the Kastamuni folk, and seem less laborious. It seems strange that they have no striking characteristics, considering that they are completely cut off from the rest of the world and that they are surrounded by dense, impenetrable forests.

Three days we spent at Yazlik Beilan, a small village on the Unieh *chaussée*. The seaward traffic along the chaussée is absurdly small, the average daily transit being about sixteen ox-wagons either way, or a gross weight of about fourteen tons. The only export of which I could gain any tidings was eggs for Constantinople. These go by mule-back as a quicker means of transport than the ox-wagon, which averages about nine miles per day. A striking light is thrown on the complete apathy and lack of enterprise of the people, Greek and Moslem alike, when one learns that although the *chaussée* is in good repair, no carriages ply upon it—not because of lack of security or means, but simply because of the general sloth and dulness of the people.

The great beech forest, however, makes amends to the traveller for the lack of other interests afforded by the country—indeed the beauties of the woodlands are hardly to be described. From any eminence one perceives a huge olive-green sea of rustling branches spreading over mountain top and vale; down in the sombre glades where the light of day scarcely penetrates, the streams of clear, cool, dark waters rush noisy and unseen on the sloping sides of the great ranges; the echoing shades send back, harmoniously subdued, the cries of birds, the harsh grunts of the buffaloes, and the voices of men. Only one sound, ominous and forbidding, reaches one—the ruthless, dry, cruel hacking of the unprofitable woodman's axe. The charm and spell of the deep forests are hard to break; and note-book, pencil and camera seem poor things.

Why should one write and take snapshots—the writing, poor windy stuff; the snapshots brown, flat and stale? Is it not better to sit and gaze, and wonder at the superb wealth and richness with which Nature has clothed these inaccessible mountains; to try to count the dimples in that quilt of tree-tops; to listen to the wooing, gently-whispering voices of the forest; to note the soft changing shades; to pick at the wealth of soft lawn grass with one's idle fingers; to breathe with pleasure that genial air, heavy with the scent of pine and the mournful aroma of the dead leaves of a hundred autumns, yet as refreshing as cold, clear water to one parched in the desert; or towards evening to mark the weltering sunset and then wait for the moon to appear, dimly effulgent, through a dense yet gleaming curtain of wholesome and unfevered mists, which cling and hover around the forests or sway and eddy down the valleys, making the mountain, already mighty in daylight, appear like the huge ranges of some greater planet, and the deep gorges seem unfathomable abysses? In that belt of forest land upon the coast is it wonderful that Pantheism should not be unknown—can we not forgive the error in mistaking the wondrous works for the builder's hand itself?

From Yaslik Beilan we went down to Niksar, a town of foul folk and abominable and poisonous stinks. The people are ugly, small, ill-built and as offensive as those of Ladik, rude, staring and savage, tricked out in shabby European clothes and slyly and slimily fanatical. Truly the Pontus people are not attractive: the Armenians are Armenian, the Kizilbash are crushed and dull, and hesitate not to beg, the Greeks and Moslems apathetic beyond all imagination.

Through a dull country of *yaila* ridges and destroyed forests we travelled on to Millet Hamidieh, a Greek town which has sprung up rather suddenly but which now seems to have ceased growing. Three more days over more grass, badly cultivated lands and high but unimpressive mountains brought us to Shebin Kara-Hissar. Of that town I know but little. In August (perhaps in May it is otherwise) it is situated in the midst of the most dismal and gigantic heaps of earth ever man dreamt of—miles and miles of ridges, mountains, valleys, kloofs, rain-worn spruits of a monotonous yellow and brown. Only here and there a village garden, with its poplars and patch of

green, serves to throw into even greater relief the deadly dulness of the landscape.

From Shebin Kara-Hissar we proceeded to Zaghapa, and discovered that the small, dark, idle people of the mountains had come to an end, and were replaced by a burly race of hook-nosed men with a distinctly Turkoman cast of feature, marvellously intelligent, perceptive, hospitable and industrious. Two of the village notables informed me that the dark people inhabited the left bank of the Lycus and the mountains, and were known to be dull and stupid. Next day down the valley of the Lycus I found that their statements were absolutely accurate; the people on the left bank were dark, dull and stupid, seemingly a mixture of low Kermanji and, I should imagine, some Mongol strain. The fair-haired people who inhabit the opposite bank distinctly resemble the ordinary peasants from the vicinity of Angora.

Late at night we reached the large straggling collection of villages known as Yeniji. As the disposition of this hamlet is very typical of the manner in which the average Turkish village in this part of the world is organised, it would not, perhaps, be amiss to describe it in detail. At the bottom of the valley of the Lycus are a number of houses inhabited by those who tend and cultivate the more delicate crops of maize and barley; a few hundred feet higher than these, and perhaps a mile away, are the houses of those who organise the mountain water supply, keep the grain mills and orchards; some two hundred feet higher still is a flattish table-land where the bulk of the grain supply is raised, and where there is a large collection of shanties for harvesters; above this tableland is a high mountain, whose lower slopes are covered with fairly dense pines, and on the very top of the mountain is a village whither the Yeniji shepherds repair during the spring and early summer. Thus we have Lower Yeniji, Higher Yeniji, Yeniji Fields, and Yeniji Yaila, the village forming a kind of central idea, around which a number of sub-divisions are grouped. As the villages contain their own mills, carpenters and builders, the grain grown serves as food, the local herds provide wool, and the local forest firewood and building material, the people grow more and more local in their ideas, and if it

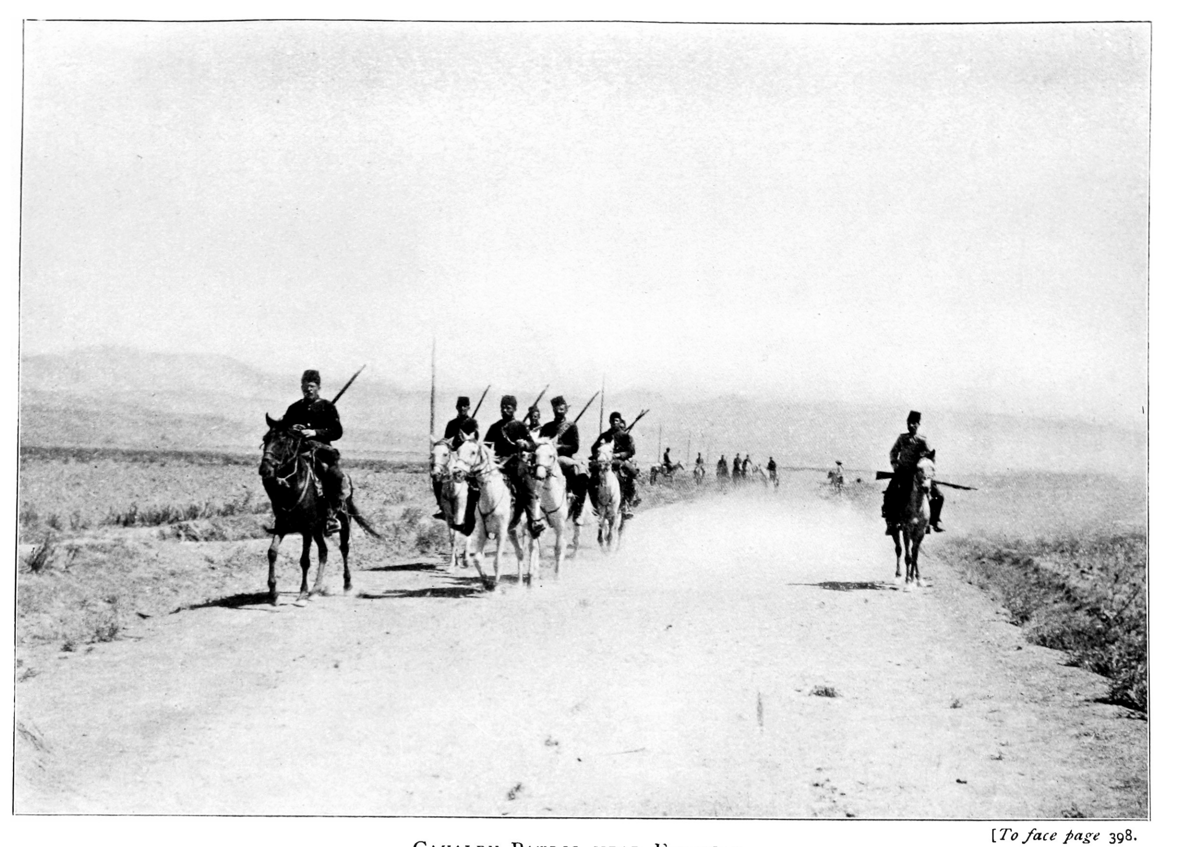
were not for military service would probably have little knowledge of the outside world; and it seems to me to speak volumes in their favour when one finds that they are by no means stupid.

From Yeniji to Erzinjan is perhaps the dullest ride which one could take through a country not considered an absolute desert—bald, brown mountain tops and grey and uninteresting stones were extended over an almost limitless panorama. A few weeks previously this stretch had been green pasture, but had now become a rank desert of dead, brown, stubby grass. When at length the valley of Erzinjan came into view, the scene was no more inviting. A haze of heat hung over the whole land and seemed to rob the gardens of their greenery, and the town stood like a black patch amid a sea of grey and yellow. From the valley came a hot, dry blast of scorching wind, and the huge mountains of the Dersim lent no beauty to the scene; small scraps of snow on the highest peaks were only a mockery, and the jagged brown sides had neither charm nor attraction. Erzinjan itself is a miserable mud town surrounded by magnificent buildings, roads and gardens, all the work of the energetic Field-Marshal Zekki, one of the few men with really vigorous minds in Turkey.

The inhabitants of Erzinjan are reckoned to be mostly Turks descended from the colonists planted by Sultan Selim; in manner and appearance they closely resemble the Moslems of Shebin Kara-Hissar and Niksar. Outside the town dwell a multitude of mixed Kizilbash and Kermanji Kurds, with a few Zazas, all extremely poor and not to be compared for industry with the peasants round Palu, though more wealthy.

During our stay at Erzinjan our tents were pitched in a garden just on the outskirts of the town, and one day we drove an hour into the country to lunch with Zia Bey, the owner of the garden. This was the menu:—

1. Thick white soup with pastry in it.
2. Pilau of sheep's heads and tails of fat-tailed sheep.
3. Stuffed cucumbers.
4. Greek corn in brown gravy.
5. Puffs of pastry.



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CAVALRY PATROL NEAR ERZINJAN.



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TURKISH VILLAGERS OF YENI CHERI NEAR ERZINJAN.

6. Stuffed aubergines.
7. Balls of batter with syrup.
8. Squares of meat with cream.
9. A sweet of almonds.
10. Balls of meat and rice.
11. Compôte of apricots.
12. Pyramid of pilau.

From Erzinjan we rode to a Turkish village called Jimin, where the people wear large twisted turbans, are wealthy and industrious, and of a far finer physique than the surrounding villagers. They reckon themselves to be descended from the Janissaries of Sultan Selim.

As one proceeds eastwards the Kurds grow uglier and more hideous, some, indeed, being quite repulsive. They are in keeping with the scenery; if the reader can imagine himself the size of an ant and at that stature taking a walk round a disused gravel pit, he will have a fairly accurate notion of the dismal valley which stretches to Erzerum.

At Mamakhatun there is a castle, mosque, and tomb. The tomb is built in the Seljukian manner with a pointed roof and groined interior, and is stated to be that of the daughter of one of the Ak Koyunlu Turkoman Sultans. This seems probable, and if it is the case we may infer a survival of the arts in these regions even after the invasion of Timur.

The following morning we set out for Ashkaleh. The scenery grew less oppressively repulsive as we deserted the accursed valley of Erzinjan and entered the Kurketter hills, a fertile tract of country where we saw multitudes of fat-tailed sheep and heavily laden caravans. As we passed through two Turkish villages, the children came out with cucumbers and water-melons as gifts for the travellers, harvesters ran forward to claim their customary tax, and all was happy and pastoral as man could wish.

Presently, just as the great Trebizond Road came in sight, we came across a large Kizilbash village, outside which a flock of sheep were being milked by two men and some women. Now the thirsty traveller's claim to fresh milk is as just and as well recognised by all shepherds in Turkey as the "Keep to the Left" regulation is in Piccadilly, and I was so accustomed to

the tradition that, hardly thinking, I handed the shepherd a cup. The man made some demur at filling it, and the women grumbled beneath the veils under which they were crouching. "Are we to share milk with all comers?" the man snarled as he handed the cup. In reply to this rudeness we gave payment. "I can feed a hundred dogs like you for nothing," he shouted after us. The two *zaptiehs* were naturally angry at this and turned to argue with the shepherd, but I ordered them to ride on. Instantly the whole place was in an uproar. The shepherd and the women hastily began to collect huge stones, while from the village angry screams and squawks showed that the female contingent there was ready for battle. For a moment things looked excessively unpleasant. The handsome old headmen sat gazing passively at the tumult and made no motion to stop the disturbance. "Fara-masun!" screamed the women. "Kaffir!" yelled the shepherd. "Fara-masun!" gabbled a twenty-stone old hag, brandishing a huge stick. Curses and insults were showered on us, and the women, who were now worked up to a pitch of fanatic frenzy, flitted to and fro, filling their veils with jagged and well-balanced stones. The old men, looking more like the Olympian Jove than ever, spoke not a word. Slowly we rode through the village, and personally I did not breathe freely until we had emerged into the valley and the shrieks of abuse had grown hoarse and faint in the distance.

We had hardly proceeded twenty minutes' distance from the hamlet when several horsemen began to appear, following us. They were wealthy young Aghas who evidently ruled the roast in the district. They were by no means apologetic, and said that the *zaptiehs* had caused all the trouble and would be punished. I did not agree with this view. One who had been particularly aggressive said he would ride on; I used ill-sounding words, whereat he said he would go home. "Not so fast, red-head," said Hasso the thief, and swung my carbine into the young gentleman's face. The Aghas stayed with us looking somewhat puzzled and a little crestfallen. When we reached Ashkaleh we discovered the whole cause of the commotion—the Mudir was absent, and there were only three *zaptiehs* in the town and one commissary of police. This little force could of course do nothing; but there came a bolt from the blue. For some reason,

Zekki Pasha (and I am beginning now to take a more charitable view of his motives) had caused me to be followed, or shadowed, by a subaltern and sixteen cavalrymen. This party was reported to have arrived at the offending village, the three *zaptiehs* were filled with courage and sallied forth, the impudent Agha, to his intense astonishment, was clapped into jail; and presently the subaltern and his sixteen men arrived with four notables and the shepherd who had caused the whole affair.

The subaltern, who was a young man of some sense, suggested that all the prisoners should be soundly whipped and sent home to attend to their wives. I agreed, and just as I hoped the matter would be carried through, the *kiatib* of the telegraph office intervened, saying that the matter had been referred to headquarters. The four notables were haled out before me, and solemn and downcast men they looked; no word of excuse had they to make, save that they all had enormous families, particularly the shepherd, the eldest of whose twelve children was three years of age. I spoke to them in a fatherly way and recalled to them their ladies' behaviour, at which they wept, and then I obtained their release; the shepherd, however, we kept. The next morning at an early hour I was aroused by the news that a commission of inquiry had arrived, composed of the Public Prosecutor and the Advocate-General. It then appeared that between nervousness and fear of responsibility the telegraph clerk had wired three different accounts of the affair, in which we had been slain and mutilated in various ways. To end a tale of length, the telegraph clerk was cursed for a fool, the shepherd was beaten and released, and having mounted into victorias provided by the authorities, we sailed away to Erzerum.

From Ashkaleh to Erzerum we travelled down a yellow valley with houses with flat roofs, whereon was stacked the fodder for the year. Most of the villages seemed to be Kizilbash, some few Armenian, and fewer Turkish. At last at Ilidji we reached the end of the valley, and the plain of Erzerum opened before us, but, alas! it was yellower, duller and drier than ever. Imagine a circle of hills, barren even of rocks, enclosing a swamp and a flat baked brick of a plain, and you have some conception of the appalling dreariness of that dismal spot. The brain is oppressed by a confused irritation, the eyes are scorched, the mind made

vacuous in the presence of this dismal emptiness. Dust devils buffet and blind you, a sun of brass scorches you, a cold wind chills you, a vile landscape disgusts you. The Sahara is terrible and strikes you with fear, the Harra of Syria fills you with terror and curiosity, but the cultivated plain of Erzerum gives you only a feeling of boredom so acute that a keen desire to quit it overcomes every other feeling. And Erzerum itself is a town meaner than a village, with bazaars like dunghills, houses solid and dull, gardens like swamps, and nothing so cheerful as the graveyards. In grim mockery it is surrounded by fortifications; but what madman would ever attack it? Did not the crazed Timur pass by, appalled at the ugliness of the place?

All the way from Shebin Kara-Hissar the country had been growing more dismal, more desolate, more revolting; and curiously enough—Heaven knows I am trying to tell the truth—the squalor of the villages and the vileness of the buildings increased as the Turkish influence decreased. The only villages worthy of the name were those of Zaghapa, Yenijé, and Jimin; for though the Armenians are good builders, they never waste money on their houses, just as their capacity for good tailoring does not prevent even their wealthiest tradesmen from being exceedingly shabbily dressed; and the Kizilbash Kurds are resigned to poverty and make little attempt at progress. An example of Armenian frugality may be cited in the monastery of Sourp Vank. It is a well-endowed establishment, and a summer resort of many of the wealthy tradesmen of Erzerum; the church is spotlessly clean, the altar richly decorated, but the guest room is as miserable a den as could be found in any *khan* in the *vilayet*, and the sleeping rooms for strangers are as packed as any doss-house in Whitechapel.

# CHAPTER V

## KURDISTAN

FROM Erzerum we proceeded to the blusterous heights of Palendokan, whence one may enjoy a view to the south even more appalling in its desolation than that obtained when looking north from the opposite side of the mountains. The night we spent shuddering with cold, and the morning we passed in unthawing our frozen limbs—what a climate, where one is pierced with a bitter winter's blast, which carries into one's face the powdered dust of a rainless autumn, and whistles through fields of corn unripe enough to shame Yorkshire! When we had uncracked our joints to a degree of flexibility sufficient to permit of our mounting, we proceeded to the village of Madrak, the residence of Selim Bey of the Zirikan. The village is an excellent example of the policy of the present government with regard to the nomads. Twenty years ago the Zirikan were wealthy, independent shepherds. For five months in the year they dwelt in tents, moving, with enormous herds and flocks, from valley to valley in spring, from slope to slope in summer, and mountain top to mountain top in early autumn sending into Erzerum from time to time large quantities of butter and slaughter-animals for sale. Towards the end of autumn they spent a proportion of their earnings on barley and hay, which they purchased from the Armenian and Moslem farmers of the Mush plain and the Erzerum valley. By the time these purchases were completed, the winter had set in, and the nomads, having stored their provender, retired into underground winter dwellings, where they awaited the return of spring.

This is the obvious economic settlement of any country such as Armenia or Mesopotamia, where nature has separated the country into two distinct divisions of arable and pasture lands; and in such regions all the government has to do is to see that the nomads do not raid the farmers, and that the farmers, on the other hand, do not endeavour to extort by peaceful methods more than a reasonable profit. The late Midhat Pasha, however, gave a great impetus to the pernicious system of settling, or endeavouring to settle, nomads as cultivators of the soil. The intentions of Midhat Pasha were undoubtedly excellent, and under his personal supervision the scheme was robbed of much of its mischief; but when that great, if perhaps misguided, man fell, only one portion of his policy had taken firm root in the brains of those who were to misconduct the affairs of the Empire, and that was the settlement of nomads of all classes and kinds at all risks and hazards. The object of the continuance of this policy was nominally the pacification of so-called turbulent tribes, who, as history has shown, never gave the least trouble to a just or even moderately strong government, and who, if treated with ordinary kindness, are a bulwark of strength in time of war, having at their disposal camps, good horses, and a knowledge of the country such as no settled peasant can ever possess. But the true motives which impelled those in power are obscure and confused. The first and primary object was to confine the minds of the Kurds in the strong chains of Sunni orthodoxy, which includes an interpretation of the rights of the Caliph so strained that it allows an autocrat to have no regard for the welfare of his subjects, and eases his mind of any qualms as to the criticism which his more insane acts may provoke. That no tent-dweller in Turkey-in-Asia has accepted, or ever will accept, this teaching in its entirety is as patent a fact as that all settled villagers who are Moslems and speak Turkish are bound hand and foot by this belief in the divine right of the Sultan. To induce the Kurds to abandon their tents and their immemorial customs was one step towards assimilating them to the enormous majority of so-called Turkish peasantry; the next was to instil into them those religious doctrines which would make them obedient slaves.

As I have said, Madrak was an excellent example of this

policy. By dint of cajoling and flattering, the leading Aghas were induced to make the Zirikan cultivate the land around their villages, and the depth of the guile employed to persuade these people to conform to the wishes of the government may be judged from the fact that they were made to believe that the land was not theirs, and that they might be driven off by force, but that, in his kindness, the Sultan had made it over to them as a gift. The Zirikan fell into the trap; they cultivated the land, and the grain and hay were enough to feed their flocks and to leave a surplus for sale. But since the people could no longer attend to their herds as carefully as before, the latter diminished in quantity and quality each year. The Nemesis which will overtake these unfortunate people is not hard to foresee. At present the poor cultivation of the plains, and the lack of general communication, causes all grain to have a certain local market. But when once the enormous areas of corn-growing land of northern Mesopotamia are in working order, the whole of northern Kurdistan will be flooded with cheap grain, the wretched stuff yielded to the sweat of the Zirikan will be worthless, their flocks will have declined through neglect, and bankruptcy or migration will stare them in the face. I would not speak with so much certainty did I not know that almost the whole of the agricultural population between Rowandiz and Erbil has descended to the plains, because, once there was a little security in the fertile lands, cultivation on the mountains became useless and absurd.

At Madrak one was able to detect the effects of Turkification; the Agha lived in Erzerum, the women were veiled, there was a mosque and an Imam, and the men were all acquainted with the Turkish language, which some of them, indeed, talked amongst themselves. As we proceed further south towards Khinis the outward effects were less noticeable; the women no longer covered their faces, and raw, drawling Kermanji was the only language. But complete sedentary life was beginning to tell on the rising generation, and sore eyes and unhealthy children were not uncommon.

The ride from Tshurma to Khinis is almost as dull as that from Erzerum to Tshurma. Just outside Khinis we passed a small ruined Armenian church of the usual pattern. The town

of Khinis is inhabited by Kurds and a few Armenians. The town is not beautiful, but after so many hours of dusty, drab-coloured country, its gardens and melon patches seemed a veritable garden of Eden. The Mutesarrif received me with great ceremony, and introduced me to two despondent officers, who commanded the Zirikam and Jibranli Hamidieh. They wore that look of dissatisfaction and shame which I have noticed on the faces of all who hold similar posts. There was no humbug about them, and though they did not speak, their eyes said more plainly than could words: "We are in an absurd position, of which we are much ashamed. Please do not laugh at us; it is not our fault."

From Khinis we rode to Mollah Khalil, passing on our way an Armenian village which seemed in a fairly prosperous condition. There were no complaints of trouble from the Hamidieh, as the people stated that the only Kurds in the village were their servants. We also encountered a large caravan of Armenians carrying pepper from Mush. Most of the men did not resemble the Armenians of the West, being tall and fair-haired and having refined aquiline features. We also passed a large settlement of Shaderli Kizilbash.

At mid-day we halted near a small village inhabited by Bellikan Kurds. A little mild-eyed old man came out to see us and poured forth a sad tale. "Formerly," he said, "we lived with the Armenians like brothers. Religion was the only difference. Now we are always quarrelling, about I know not what. Are we in fault? Are the Armenians in fault? I know not—by God, I know not. All of us suffer, Kurd and Armenian alike. Soldiers come in every day, eat our chickens, beat our men, and demand taxes twenty-five years in arrear. How will it end? The Hamidieh rob us, the Vali robs us, the Mudir robs us. What are we to do? How are we to live?" The poor old man nearly wept as he told his story, and it was but little comfort we could give him. One thing was pretty obvious, and that was that the Hamidieh did not spare the Sunni Kurds, who do not serve in the regiments any more than the Armenians, if, indeed, as much.

At Mollah Khalil we found another village of the Shaderli, but this time Sunnis and affiliated to the Jibranli. The village

Agha described to me at length the policy of the government in forming the Hamidieh. He also said that the poor had grown rich and the rich had been made poor—a somewhat cryptic statement which I could not understand until he remarked that he was now poor himself.

From Mollah Khalil we rode to Tsikhavi, an Armenian village, where we bumped somewhat heavily on the Armenian question in its most acute form. There was great difficulty in seeing the priests and headman of the village, who feared the police; after much trouble we got them out, but they were in no mood to talk of anything but their grievances. "Last year wicked Armenians came from Russia and committed crimes. They stopped in the villages, and thirty-six of our men were killed in consequence by the Kurds and troops. Now we are at peace with the Kurds" (this was repeated three times), "and the Hamidieh do not trouble us, they are our friends; but the Circassians in the neighbouring villages rob us by riding over our crops, and the soldiers and *zaptiehs* quarter themselves on us freely." I cross-examined, and even gave leading questions on other points, but could obtain no other complaints. From the confusion and whispering which arose when I asked the question, I somewhat suspect that revolutionaries have been in the village this year. Anyhow the people had been blackmailed by the bands.

Riding into Mush, we passed through three villages, in one of which (Sulukh) about forty soldiers were quartered. There is evidently no raiding by day, as the village people paid no heed to me when I fired at some ducks and subsequently at some pigeons. The town of Mush is largely built of mud, but is prettily situated and so gains from nature a little beauty which man has not the wit to give it. We interviewed the Mutesarrif, a Circassian, who had once been governor on the Adriatic and who pined for feasts with Admiral Fisher and shoots with Lord Charles Beresford. He was by no means sanguine as to the future of the Mush plain. His view was that the revolutionaries must cease visiting it, or the government officials behave honestly, or the Armenians emigrate; but he did not consider that any one of these desirable things would ever come to pass.

The Mutesarrif handed us over to Khalil Agha, a notable who

was popular with Moslems and Christians alike. He was the possessor of a very beautiful guest-house, containing a room richly decorated in green, gold, red, and yellow ; the design was his own, and the work that of an Armenian from Van. I must admit that the effect was marvellously pleasing, and gave me for a moment a glimpse of infinite possibilities which might be achieved if Western influence could be successfully exposed. There is no doubt that the room was a very beautiful piece of work. On one side was a door within a pointed arch placed between two other arches ; the two adjacent walls were divided into panels, and the side opposite the door was pierced by five excellently proportioned windows, while about 2 ft. from the ceiling ran a dado of small pointed arches supported by clusters of columns. The panels were each filled with various patterns of flowers of conventional shapes but in natural colours on cream-coloured grounds ; the arches were decorated with gold and green thistle leaves on red and blue ; the ceiling was divided into squares, and picked out with cream and a repetition of the flower pattern. The artist evidently revelled in colour and had the courage of his opinions, and his audacity was justified by the results. The divans which surrounded the room were covered with mauve silks relieved with silver thread patterns. The room had taken a year and two months to complete and paint ; no stencil had been used in the whole work, and the rough pencil sketches could be seen under the paint. Yet I daresay there is not a Levantine in Turkey who would not on seeing it belch out his eternal : "Ah, que c'est sauvage cela, ils n'ont pas d'idées chics, ils sont tout à fait barbares et fanatiques. Mon père a un smokeen-rum avec un plafond de linoleum anglais, vous vous diriez à Witshapel si vous le voyez seulement." Alas ! it is this mule-brained jackanapes who is destined to influence and corrupt every attempt that may be made towards raising the fallen peoples of Asiatic Turkey.

Khalil Agha was ready enough to talk, but a Greek police officer, who had fixed a tenacious but lack-lustre eye on all our movements since our arrival, sat spying and boring and making conversation impossible. At length this tedious person took his leave, and after a little beating about the bush I asked Khalil Agha point-blank what he, as a Kurd, thought of the

state of affairs in the Mush plain and what remedy he conceived would be possible. He hesitated a little at first, but after making me promise that I would not use what he might say in any way to his danger, he said: "England has always been the friend of Turkey—England has only to use her power and these troubles will cease—it would be very easy for England."

The next morning I visited the Armenian Catholic bishop, who seemed a very cheery old gentleman in spite of his public griefs. From him I gathered that on the whole the Armenians were not plundered by the Kurds to any degree, but suffered rather from the police. The military he had nothing to say against, but on the other hand the civil administration was positively pestilent. The Mutesarrif, he said, was an excellent governor and strove vainly to ameliorate matters, but was so surrounded by spies and incompetents that his efforts were fruitless.

With regard to the Mush plain another fact must be taken into account, and that is that whether through tyranny or mismanagement, or by breeding or education, or a combination of all, the Armenians of the Mush plain are at present an extremely difficult people to manage. They are very avaricious and would object to pay the most moderate taxes; they are also exceedingly treacherous to one another, and often join the revolutionaries to wipe off old scores on their fellow villagers. As for the tactics of the revolutionaries, anything more fiendish one could not imagine—the assassination of Moslems in order to bring about the punishment of innocent men, the midnight extortion of money from villages which have just paid their taxes by day, the murder of persons who refuse to contribute to their collection-boxes, are only some of the crimes of which Moslems, Catholics, and Gregorians accuse them with no uncertain voice.

We left Mush escorted by thirty troopers, two officers, two *zaptiehs*, and one commissary of police—a cavalcade imposing enough on the highroad, but a dreary encumbrance on the mountain side. The first day's ride consisted of getting out of the Mush valley into the Anti-Taurus, a business which did not take more than three hours, at the end of which time we reached

the village of Bersin, inhabited by cheerful, but poor, Bekiran Kurds. We little knew that that night was to be the last one of peaceful slumber for some time. The morning broke with cracked trumpetings from the musician of the escort, and in a short time we were under way, and commenced a long and painful ascent of those mountains, which are white in winter and yellow all the rest of the year. Alone the business would have been tedious, with our escort it was tragic; the great troop-horses blundered and stumbled, the men dragged themselves painfully along in their huge heavy boots and trailing, clanking sabres. We ascended, descended, ascended and again descended, then at last entered a deep, narrow gorge with a shelving and perilous pathway. There we encountered that accident, that sacrifice to the God of Journeys, which every traveller in Turkey must meet with once—a soldier's horse blundered off the path, slid down the slope, scrambled for an instant, neighed piteously to its fellows, and then vanished over the brink with a shower of pebbles and stones, a sickening thud a moment after telling the end of the poor beast's story. The man to whom it belonged blubbered dismally, and scrambled down after it. I found him later crying and stroking the poor broken body at the bottom of the ravine. The officer in charge eagerly explained that the horse belonged to the government, and that it did not matter, so we resumed our journey in a somewhat pensive mood—the government is, then, so hateful that it is a matter for rejoicing even when one of its horses is killed.

We mounted and mounted, and still continued mounting, riding along stony ridges and peering down into abysmal valleys. At the bottom of these we could occasionally see little green patches of maize, and some squares of building, which showed that the country was not completely uninhabited; but although our path was well-worn and dusty, not one single soul did we meet on that bleak and lonely highland. Time rolled on, and about ten hours after we started we suddenly commenced a precipitous descent into a vast chink in the earth, some 3,000 feet deep, at the bottom of which we found human beings and houses, gardens and mosquitoes. The people were indeed Kurds, but were no more like the heavy-featured and almost grotesque northern shepherds than the latter resemble the small,

well-featured, mild-eyed Kizilbash of the Erzinjan valley. The Anti-Taurus Kurds are slimly-built men with sharp features, keen eyes, long black moustaches, and a peculiar furtive and wistful expression. The Armenians who dwell beside them are not to be distinguished from their Moslem neighbours by any mark or favour, and are obviously of the same race.

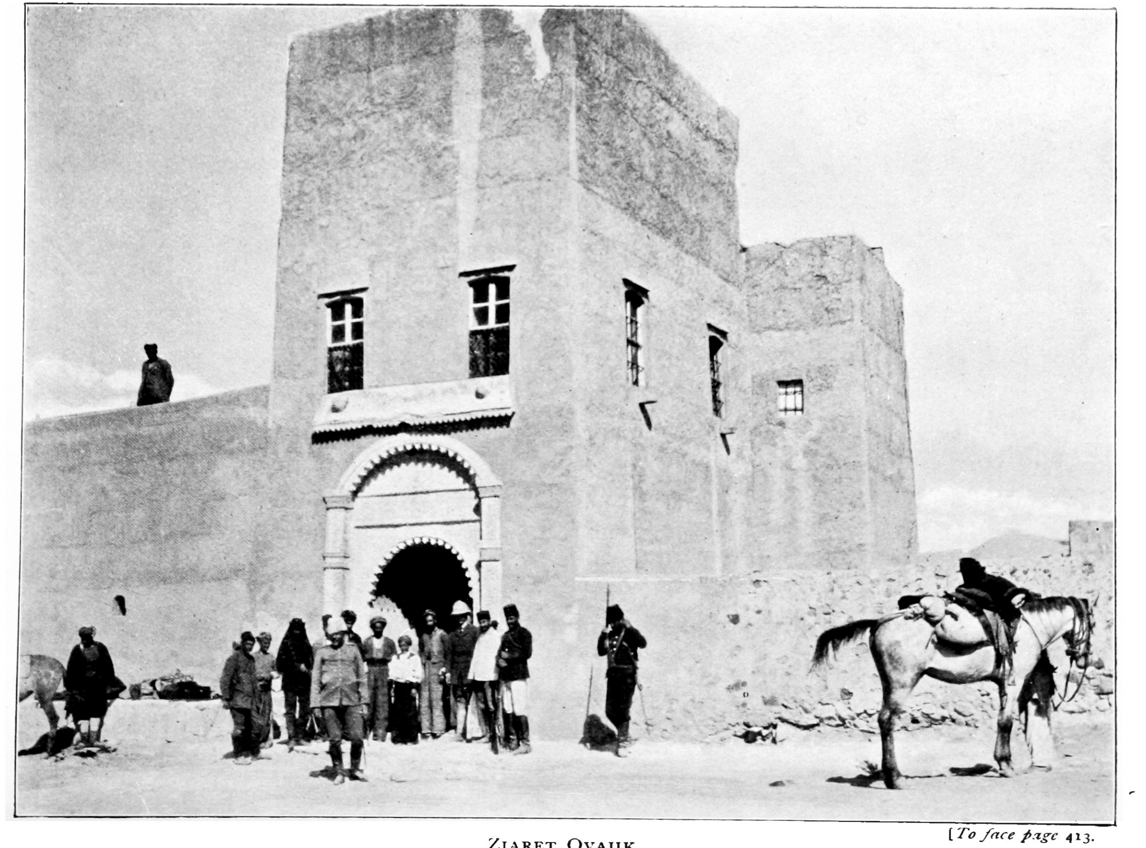
That night I had not much opportunity of talking to the people, but the next day, as the ride to Jemalink was not above one hour, we had ample time to talk to the villagers. One fact was soon borne in upon us, and that was that malaria may be as great a pest at an altitude of 7,000 feet as anywhere else. In the mountains of Sassun the valleys are carefully terraced, and the spring waters gathered and distributed over the artificial fields ; in these swamps dhurra and maize are sown, and overlooking them the sage inhabitants build their houses. Thousands of feet above, the huge stony peaks tower immense and threatening, while below stand these strange squares of shining green and the little stone blocks of peasants' houses beside them. As a reward for their pains the whole of the Sassun population is shaking with fever ; the women are blanched, the men are yellow, the children rickety, the oldsters doting, the babies puling. Never did I see people with such gaunt and ghastly faces as in those wealthy, well-built villages of Sassun ; the only men who looked in any state of health were the shepherds, whose business carries them away from the pestilent fields and villages. The people have that hopeless look of lassitude so common in the Campagna di Roma, but, strangely enough, it does not seem to affect either their combative instincts or their industry. Equally curiously also, these mountain Kurds, like the people of Hakkiari, are great travellers, going to all parts of the Empire as labourers, muleteers and workmen of all kinds, and returning once more to their uninviting hills when they have amassed sufficient money to build a house and start a farm or *kaum*.

The organisation of the Sassun tribes is apparently peculiar. They are divided firstly into the Bosikan and Kurian, who, by their own account, worshipped a sword thrust into the ground before the revelation of Mohammed. Attached to the Bosikan and Kurian are a certain number of Armenians, who apparently

intermarry with them occasionally—but upon this point I am not quite clear; at any rate, I could find no traces of subordination or serfdom such as exists in the Palu districts. The Bosikan apparently consider that they were subjects of one Tavit of Bosika Castle. The Bosikan and Kurian are, and have ever been, at feud, and dare not cross into each other's villages; consequently members of both tribes know more of the countries which they have visited than of the actual districts in which they live.

From Jemalink we proceeded by a somewhat difficult road to Khabeljous, a collection of villages and farms situated in the valley of the Maratug Su. The valley is very fertile and carefully cultivated, but is an even more deadly hotbed of agues and fevers than the *wadi* of Jemalink. Not a soul in the district was reputed to be in good health, and of the sixty soldiers and officials posted there, only one man had escaped fever. Khabil Jous is inhabited by the Malashigo, the north end of the valley by Malahaja, and the immediate neighbourhood between Hazo and Khabil Jous is held by the Bederi, Jellali, Sarmi, Musi and Zekeri. All these tribes speak a peculiar Arab dialect as well as Armenian and Kermanji. The tradition is that formerly the whole country belonged to the Bosikan and Kurian, but that under the rule of King Tavit an Abbasid Emir named Shaykh Nasr-ed-din invaded the country and settled the other tribes in it.

From Khabil Jous we proceeded to Hazo, where we found a Meccan Arab acting as Kaimakam. He was half a negro, but was filled with great contempt for the "wild beasts," as he called the Kurds, amongst whom he lived; as for the Armenians, he said that they were a detestable race, but that that was no excuse for bad government, which did no good to anybody. Hazo is a pretty little town, situated on a neck between two high hills at the foot of the Anti-Taurus. It overlooks the huge expanse of low rugged hills which occupy the peninsula between the Tigris and Bohtan rivers. Hazo is interesting from the fact that it is at present the northern limit of Irakian architecture. The large mosque and the Armenian convent are identical in design and building with similar works in the Tur Abdin and Beled Sinjar, and bear no traces of Persian and Armenian influence.



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Ziaret Ovajik.

From Hazo we rode to Ziaret, a religious institution partaking of the nature of a hotel for the rich, an almshouse for the poor, and a monastery for the holy. On the way thither we passed a caravan of some 150 Baba Kurd men and women who were buying and selling horses. Strangely enough, they were unarmed, and it appeared that they travelled under the protection of two Kadri dervishes from Sulaimanieh, who organised these expeditions and shared in the profits. Ziaret stands at the entrance of the Bitlis pass, which is a wonderful, striking and impressive gorge leading to the capital; although this was the third time I had ridden up it, I must say that the journey was by no means dull. The Bitlis gorge is indeed rendered delightful by natural and historic associations. The numerous bridges which span the river are of every period of antiquity, and the solid circular structure of Roman style, the graceful sweeping curves of the Persian pointed arches, and many varieties of Transitional periods are to be seen. On the left stand the vast, rocky walls of Motikan, whence the ancestors of the present tribesmen yelped shrill insults at Corbulo's impotent veterans; on the right are the wonderful mountains of true Kurdistan, green and delicately coloured, changing in tone and shape with each movement of the creeping, decreasing and increasing shadows; while down the glen rushes and slides the river, now in a spouting torrent leaping between two rocks, now a noisy rattling shallow, now a black and silent depth hidden by crowding willows and dense sedges on the banks.

It has been my fortune to see the town of Bitlis in winter, summer and autumn, and I must admit that for me it has but few charms. As it is built in a valley, the traveller comes suddenly upon it, and may or may not be impressed with its beauty. For me a diversity of colour is necessary for enjoyment, and Bitlis is as dull as a photograph, being built of russet stones on brown rocks. The houses are ponderous and gloomy, the castle ruinous and uninteresting, the government buildings squalid and miserable, the inhabitants either bastard Turkish-speaking Kurds, or beady-eyed, heavy-featured Armenians.

I feel convinced that the many and grievous misjudgments of the Moslems of the Asiatic provinces arise in many cases

from a superficial observation of the Mohammedan city folk of Diarbekir and Urfa: these are indeed a race, if race they may be called, who appeal but little to one's sympathies. For the most part they are either the descendants of officials, or Kurdish landowners who have left their properties, or Christian renegades. Their superior advantages before the law have caused them to wax idle and tyrannical; lack of communication has made them provincial and narrow-minded; and their isolated social situation has cut them off from the possibility of engaging in commerce. The only life which lies before them is either to engulf themselves in that huge coterie of the Moslem bureaucracy, or else to live on their capital or rents and while away a useless existence in begetting large numbers of sickly children. These people form a congenial soil for the growth of fanaticism and class prejudices; their dull-witted veiled wives and mothers instil into their minds prejudices which can never be eradicated. The company of servants and sycophants in childhood, the lack of any form of sport or exercise, the formal course of their religion, and the superficial nature of their education, all tend to the production of a dull-witted, unthinking, self-indulgent bigot, whose mind has been blighted and destroyed in the very bud.

Against these we must set the town Armenians. Speaking generally, it may be said that the Armenians of Van, Bitlis and Erzerum are of one nation or race, curiously enough differing widely from the inhabitants of the surrounding villages. In the latter, we find a people often fair-haired, with broad and rather flat features, coarse, bristling moustaches, and of a big, heavy build; but in the towns we meet a notable type, which is uniform and distinguishable from all others. The men are somewhat short and stoutly built, with dark, sallow complexions and highly coloured cheeks; hair black and lank as a red Indian's; eyes of surprising size and darkness, but possessing brightness without brilliance, which gives them a beady and inscrutable expression; a sleek dark moustache; and a peculiar roundness and heaviness of face and feature, which is difficult to describe, but once seen is never forgotten.

The expression of the generality of town Armenian young men is one which undoubtedly inspires a feeling of distrust, and their bearing is compounded of a peculiar covert insolence and a strange suggestion of suspicion and craft. They have a way of answering an ordinary question as if the person to whom they are speaking were endeavouring to treat them dishonestly, and as if they felt themselves more than a match for him. Their manners are not by any means fawning or cringing, as many people suggest; on the contrary, they are generally somewhat brusque, but at the same time uneasy—indeed, one might well say their manners were decidedly unhappy. It is very difficult to account for this ill-bred behaviour and tone, and I myself can only attribute it to the fact that the keynote of the town Armenian's character is a profound distrust of his own co-religionists and neighbours. Whether this fear arises from long and sad experience, or from a perverted business instinct, it is hard to tell; but to say that it is not without cause may sound a harsh, but perhaps not unjust judgment.

In common with many others of the Christians of Turkey, the town Armenians have an extraordinarily high opinion of their own capacities; but in their case this is combined with a strangely unbalanced judgment, which permits them to proceed to lengths that invariably bring trouble on their heads. They will undertake the most desperate political crimes without the least forethought or preparation; they will bring ruin and disaster on themselves and others without any hesitation; they will sacrifice their own brothers and most valuable citizens to a wayward caprice; they will enter eagerly into conspiracies with men in whom they repose not the slightest confidence; they will overthrow their own national cause to vent some petty spite on a private individual; they will at the very moment of danger grossly insult and provoke one who might be their protector but may at any moment become their destroyer; by some stinging aggravation or injury they will alienate the sympathy of a stranger whose assistance they expect; they will suddenly abandon all hope when their plans are nearing fruition; they will betray the very person who might serve their cause; and, finally, they will bully and prey on one another at the very

moment that the enemy is at their gates. And this strange and unfortunate method of procedure is not confined only to their political methods ; in finance, in commerce, and in religious matters, their dealings are equally preposterous and fatal.

To add to this curious fatuousness of conduct, the town Armenians are at once yielding and aggressive. They will willingly harbour revolutionaries, arrange for their entertainment and the furthering of their ends ; yet at the same time they can be massacred without raising a finger in their own defence. Another peculiar point is that nearly every Armenian is imbued with a patriotism which is fiercely chauvinistic, and as regards his national Church he is as fanatical as any Moslem, Greek, Papist or Nestorian whom he loathes and condemns. Yet his Church is essentially a national, and not a spiritual, institution, for any one who attends a Gregorian service can generally see that neither priest nor people have much reverence or respect for what happens to be afoot. Often have I been into those dirty dens where the people collect on Sundays to hear a priest recite prayers in Armenian. The altar is foul and filthy, the books are tattered and torn, the pictures are vile daubs ; the congregation is numerous, but of prayers or outward piety you see and hear little. They go to hear their language, to hear their native songs, to see that which is in their opinion the last sign of what they imagine was their great all-conquering empire ; for every Armenian is convinced that he is one of a once mighty and imposing people with great kings and princes, and that a little tenacity will serve to restore its former glories.

This pride of race brings about many singularities, and prompts the Armenians to prey on missionaries, Jesuits, consuls and European travellers with a rapacity and ingratitude which often cause a suppressed feeling of anger. The poor Armenian will demand assistance in a loud tone, yet he will seldom give thanks for a donation. His primitive instincts tell him that it is a foreigner who gives money, education, medical assistance or protection, and for a foreigner there is no love and no fellow-feeling. He is simply a means to an end, a stepping-stone or a prop, and when used may be discarded. I have never known of a stranger who could be on terms of such intimacy with the Gregorian Armenians as he could with Greeks or even Turks. Before the

events of '95 and '96, a stranger was generally shunned; now he is appealed to, but not liked. Abuse of consular officers and missionaries is only a part of the stock-in-trade of the extra-Armenian press; and to this fact rather than to an innate avariciousness, I attribute that unpleasing greed which is evinced whenever a stranger's money is seen.

That the Armenians are doomed to be for ever unhappy as a nation, seems to me unavoidable, for one-half of their miseries arises not from the stupid, cranky, ill-managed despotism under which they live, but from their own dealings with each other. In a time of famine at Van the Armenian merchants tried to corner the available grain; the Armenian revolutionaries prefer to plunder their co-religionists to giving battle to their enemies; the anarchists of Constantinople threw bombs with the intention of provoking a massacre of their fellow-countrymen. The Armenian villages are divided against themselves; the revolutionary societies are leagued against one another; the priests connive at the murder of a bishop; the church is divided at its very foundations.

Never was a people so fully prepared for the hand of a tyrant; never was a people so easy to be preyed upon by revolutionary societies; never was there a people so difficult to lead or to reform. That these characteristics are the result of Moslem oppression, I do not for one moment believe. That that oppression has been villainous, callous, and brutal, I do not deny; but that it has brought about the peculiar, fatal fatuousness of the Armenian people is beyond all credence. What makes the Armenian national character doubly unfortunate is the geographical and political situation in which the people find themselves. The Armenians of Eastern Asiatic Turkey are for the most part in a minority, or, at best, have but a bare majority; they are dwellers in towns and valleys, and are divided by great belts of sedentary Kurdish mountaineers, interspersed with Moslem villagers, isolated in groups as at Zeitun, or scattered broadcast as at Sivas.

If the object of English philanthropists and the roving brigands (who are the active agents of revolution) is to subject the bulk of the Eastern provinces to the tender mercies of an Armenian oligarchy, then I cannot entirely condemn the

fanatical outbreaks of the Moslems or the repressive measures of the Turkish government. On the other hand, if the object of Armenians is to secure equality before the law, and the establishment of security and peace in the countries partly inhabited by Armenians, then I can only say that their methods are not those calculated to achieve success. The example of Bulgaria, where a compact, warlike population was able to drive out a minority by foreign intervention and the incursion of foreign armies, is one that cannot be followed in Eastern Turkey-in-Asia; indeed, Armenia for the Armenians would be almost as senseless a cry as England for the Britons. The Turkish government is odious, its ways are insane, its officers often reprehensible; but its faults have not been ameliorated by the conduct or character of the Armenians. The Armenians stand in no more need of a complete re-moulding and overhauling of the government system than do their Moslem neighbours.

What I have said above I apply only to town Armenians, who in my opinion form a distinct race from the villagers. In the villages, one finds as great a variety of types as in a Moslem village of Sivas. The Armenian villagers have nothing in common with the townsmen, with whom they very rarely inter-marry, the estimate of one such marriage in a thousand being given to me on good authority. It is further a matter of note that nearly the whole of the upper clergy and bishops are recruited from the townsfolk, as indeed, are almost all the revolutionary leaders. Consequently, although I have noticed the same regrettable characteristics in the villagers as in the townspeople, I should be loath to say that they were innate, and rather consider them to be imposed by the townspeople, whose superior wealth, clerical influence and educational advantages give them a good deal of power in forming the views and habits of the villagers, who naturally look upon the townsmen with considerable awe. I am the more convinced of the truth of this theory, owing to the wide difference in character of the villagers south of the Taurus and the Zeitunlis, both Armenians well separated from town Armenian influences.

As to the influence that can be asserted by an educated native on his co-religionists, I have often seen regrettable instances in widely differing zones, and it is to me extraordinary

that the Young Turks have never made any serious attempt on the Moslem peasantry, who stand waiting only for a leader or leaders. So long, however, as a frock-coat, mental indigestion, and contempt for a turban and long beard are the only stock-in-trade of the Turkish Liberals, so long will they fail to have any influence over the hard-headed Anatolians, who do at least realise that chattering parrots are not likely to improve their situation.

The night before we reached Van, somewhat to my surprise I saw a black Arab tent pitched on the shores of the lake. Riding up to it I cried "Salaam alaikum" for the first time since I left Niksar. "Alaikum es-salaam" came back the cheerful chorus. These people turned out to be Moslem Arab merchants. How cheerful, how polite, how easily courteous they were! Cups of steaming coffee were carried out: we were bidden to rest the night, and given all those gentle compliments of which only the Arab is master. They were, I doubt not, hard bargainers and deceitful cozeners; but at least they had manners and intelligence. Since we had left the Anatolians of Kastamuni we had not heard one "Peace be with you," save from the Baba Kurd dervishes near Ziaret.

Van I found unchanged in its labyrinths of mud walls, in its acres of poplars, or its scattered squalor. A few new houses had been built, the smouldering ruins of the massacres had been cleared away in the course of fifteen years, but otherwise nothing had altered. Poplars, dykes, mud walls, sickness and more poplars were all as before.

From Van we proceeded to Norkim, a village seemingly prosperous and peaceful. Here one curious fact came to light —really surprising, even in this land of surprises—namely, that the regular army and the revolutionaries are on the best of terms.

The village is about ten miles south of Van, situated in a broad, well-cultivated plain; the people seemed fairly secure and prosperous, and no complaints were brought to my notice. There was a police post in the village whence patrols issued fairly frequently by day, but none by night. However, as my escort was a military one, consisting of thirty troopers and two French-speaking officers, I had really very little to do with the

gendarmerie. None the less, it came as something of a surprise to me when one evening after dark a train of six loaded mules issued from the village and passed into the mountains unchallenged by my camp sentries, and about an hour and a half later the mules returned to the village without loads. I told my sentry to ask the man driving the mules where he had been, and he replied that he had taken them to water—a lie so palpable that even the Armenian villagers sitting near laughed aloud; but the officers of my escort made no comment on the subject. Two days later the matter was made plain, when my dragoman informed me that five revolutionary leaders had come into the village and supped with the two officers of my escort unbeknown to the police. It appears that these men had wished to see me, but, as I was in bed at the time, they had refrained from calling on me. My Arab dragoman had spent the evening with them, and he told me that the two officers were on the best of terms with them.

I subsequently learned that many of the junior officers at Van were on intimate terms with local revolutionary leaders, and that sometimes when their pay was short they borrowed money from the rebels, and on other occasions visited them in the mountains. The explanation given by the two officers of my escort of this remarkable state of affairs was as follows:—The government had disgraced the army by pampering and encouraging the excesses of the Kurds enrolled in the Hamidieh; the military officers were well aware that the Hamidieh were openly disloyal, and yet they were obliged on all occasions to condone their faults and misdeeds; the Hamidieh Kurds were only punishable by court-martial, and as courts-martial were forced by secret orders to acquit or inflict only nominal punishments on offenders, the whole odium fell on the army, and every officer was jeered at and insulted by the Civil Service on this account. The consequent ill-feeling between the Civil Service and the military was increased by the fact that the latter are always stinted in their pay, while the former are not. In the lower ranks the feeling was much the same; troopers saw that *zaptiehs* and Kurdish irregulars were permitted every licence and liberty, while they themselves were subject to a severe discipline, and had rarely sufficient food to live upon.

Apparently the Armenian revolutionaries, or at least those who work in the Van district, were not slow to appreciate the possibilities of these circumstances, and have made it clear to many of the military that their enemies are common—*i.e.* the police, the Hamidieh, and the Civil Service.

I suggest that this may, in a great measure, explain the extraordinary apathy shown by the military when called upon to assist the civil power in the apprehension of revolutionaries at Akhtamar in 1905 and on other occasions.

The morning after we left Bitlis an extraordinary incident occurred, more than instructive to those who desire to get an understanding of this singular country. My escort, which still consisted of the regular cavalry who had accompanied us from Mush, had been reinforced by two gendarmes. It had been arranged that the troopers, who were very done up after their hard "trek" over the mountains, should have a "long sleep," and that the gendarmes should do the sentry duty for the night.

About 5.30 a.m. the last gendarme on duty woke the cook and the muleteers, and as it was daylight turned in to sleep under the shadow of a wall behind my tent. At six o'clock he awoke, and made the morning hideous with his cries. He came weeping and howling to the cook's tent with a broken flint-lock in his hand. His story was that he had gone to sleep, that "'twixt drowse and dose" he had heard two men talking near him, that he had gripped his rifle which was under his head, and felt it there, that when he awoke he found that his rifle had gone and the flint-lock was in its place! When he got to this point in his tale, his cries redoubled, he beat hand on hand, repined over the ruin of his poor children, over the years he would spend in prison, and the monstrous fines he would have to pay.

The regular officer in charge of the troopers asked the Armenian headman of the village, who was selling eggs to the cook, if he could throw any light on the matter. After a little hesitation, the headman said that three "bad men" had come into the village, that they had lain in the guest-house, that two of them had left at dawn, but that one was still sleeping there. The officer and four troopers went off without more ado, but when they reached the guest-house they found the door locked.

The officer demanded admittance, but received no reply. He and his men thereupon kicked in the door. "Come out," shouted the officer. The only reply was a revolver bullet which missed the officer's head by a miracle, the powder blackening his coat. Greatly to his credit, the officer dashed into the room and dragged out the owner of the revolver, who was, of course, the "bad man."

"You can't touch me," said the bad man. "I am a Hamidieh!"

"Ah," replied the officer, "you are Hamidieh? May God curse you and the dog who named you! Hamidieh, are you? True, had you robbed an Osmanli, I could not touch you; but this time you have shot at the escort of a Consul—and nothing can save you."

Immediately the rascal threw himself on the ground howling for mercy. The change from brazen impudence to terror was delightful to see. As he lay there yelling, scabbards, whips, and sticks descended on his back like hail, and I did not feel in the least inclined to intervene. When he had had a good rib-roasting, his wrist was tied to the trumpeter's stirrup, and the camp being packed, we set off with the prisoner. Two hours later we arrived at a village where there was a police post and a police officer. The officer of the escort handed the prisoner over with a written account of his offence, with the man's own confession that his two companions had arranged to steal the rifle, that he had stayed behind to relieve the villagers of any money we might have left, and that he had only fired because he thought we had gone. Such was his own defence.

A little time after we had left, the officer of the escort told me that the man would be set free in a few hours because he was a Hamidieh, but that it was some satisfaction to him to have broken his whip across his back. As he said, "It is the first opportunity I have had of hitting one of the favourites."

From Norkim to Khoshab through a valley of yellow hills—when will that eternal yellow end? But Khoshab is a surprise and a pleasant one, for it contains, or rather is dominated by, a castle which for picturesqueness of outline and situation has not its like in Turkey, or even on the Rhine. High turrets, massive bastions, sheer frowning walls, stand perched upon a rock

which overlooks the whole valley. Behind the castle is a large enceinte defended by three strong bastions at each corner. I felt instinctively that this place must have a history and local traditions, and accordingly I procured an aged and toothless but garrulous old man, who offered to show me round. Khoshab is not the place where one would exactly expect to find a "guide," but such my old friend proved to be.

"Formerly," he said, "perhaps a hundred years ago, this land was inhabited by infidels who lived under the rule of Jenwis. But Khalid-ibn-Walid came here, and took this castle from Jenwis and gave it to the family of Sulaiman Bey. Now the Sulaiman family held this castle for many years, perhaps three hundred years, but cholera came, and in every room in the castle lay dead men. My grandfather heard people speak of that pestilence. Now only two of the Sulaiman family remained alive after that sickness; and Timur Pasha, the Kurd, who lived at Van, saw that the place was easy to come by, so he visited the survivors and stayed a long time, till the castle was full of his men. Then he said, 'This is my castle, you Sulaiman people can go away.' Well, Timur stayed a long while, but Bedr Han Bey saw that the castle was large and comfortable, so he sent gun-men and they took it from Timur, and Bedr Han gave it as a marriage portion to one of his Aghas. Later, in Abdul Medjid's day, people came with an invitation for the Agha to visit Constantinople, and he went away with Pashas and horsemen and folk, and never came back; and after that came soldiers and officers, and they sent away such of the Agha's women and servants as remained, and lived in the castle for a little and then left it. Since then it has been empty and people come to fetch stone and woodwork from it, so that it has become the ruin you see."

The castle is indeed a fine building. The great stone bastion is of red hewn stone, and has a very beautiful door of magnificent workmanship, over which are two chained lions and an inscription carved in black marble. This bastion stands on ancient, massive foundations; the rest of the castle and outworks are of mud, brick, and unhewn stone; but within the ruins show, to some extent, the magnificence and state kept up by the old feudal lords, and one can picture to oneself the bustle,

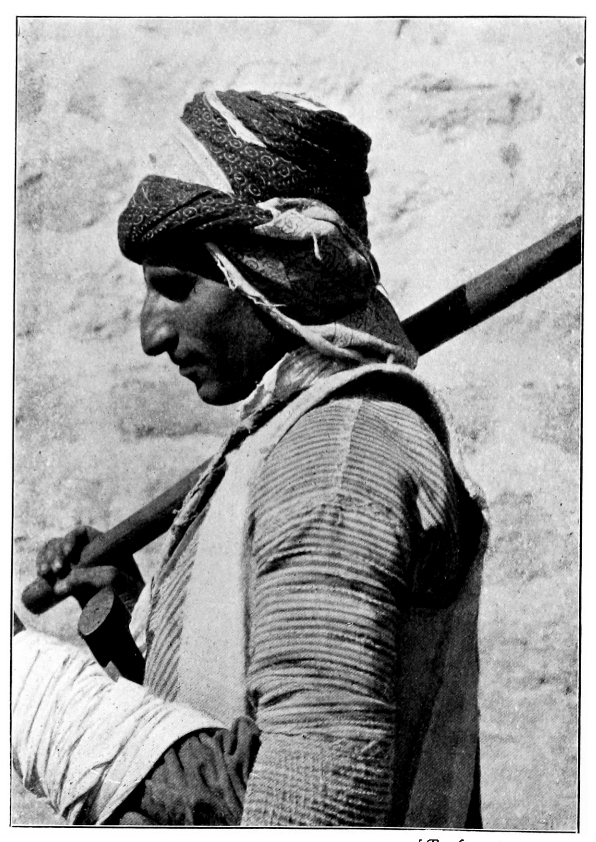
hospitality, and lavish wealth which must have been displayed there before the octopus of Stambul twisted its suckers round this part of the land.

In the evening a Shemsiki Agha paid me a visit. He told me he was a Milan and allied to Ibrahim, and that the Shemsiki Kurds were the servants of his family, *i.e.*, the Ibn Hamzat-ul-Arab, who took charge of the tribe in Khalid-ibn-Walid's time. The Agha was a small-featured, slimly-built young man, most nobly and richly attired in the richest Hamidieh fancy dress, which gives every Kurd enrolled an opportunity of indulging that passion for outlandish garments which seems innate in nearly every mountain people.

From Khoshab we proceeded over a bare and arid mountain land, which is saved from being as repulsive as that around Erzerum by the fact that the vista is too huge and immense to disgust the eye. On the way we passed an encampment of the Khani Kurds, who seemed very dismal and depressed. The Agha, who was an old, frosty-chinned man, complained loudly of the state of things in general, but of nothing in particular. The ruin of the Khoshab castle appeared to weigh heavily on his mind, also the Hamidieh, to which he did not belong; but what were his particular grievances I could by no means ascertain.

Thence onward into the bowels of yellow hills, which, as the sun waned, looked almost beautiful in two colours, purple and ochre, with fleeting, shifting lights and shades. Down a pass, over one, two, three spurs; then down into a broad valley, perhaps six miles across, shut in on either side by seamed, quilted, rocky-peaked mountains, just brown in the chill evening sunlight. We halted at the village of Enisan, where dwelt Armenians with no tincture of fear, or beggary, or crawling—just fair-haired *homines sapientes* with no salient customs or features.

The next morning we rode for one hour and three-quarters along the western slopes, and so into Bashkala, a town of mud, evidently making considerable progress. We passed through on the day of the weekly market, at which were assembled perhaps three thousand Kurds, but none who would attract any great attention.



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KURD OF NERI.



Shaykh Hamid Pasha.

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After a weary hour with a lackadaisical and pessimistic acting Mutesarrif, we set out for the village of Shaykh Hamid Pasha, a person of great religious renown in the neighbourhood. His village, which is situated perhaps two and half miles outside Bashkala, is neither very rich nor very imposing ; but the Pasha, who came out to receive me, was one of the gentlest and most courteous old men I have ever met. We were ushered into his tent, in which he pretends that October is a summer month and that at a temperature of 40° Fahr. men can sit still and look at a bubbling fountain with a feeling of pleasure.

The Shaykh was a small round-shouldered man, with a little wizened countenance, a mild twinkling blue eye, a soft paternal voice, a short grey beard and a magnificent and glittering set of false teeth of pearly whiteness and Ionic regularity. Save for fez and green turban, his dress was that of a clergyman of the Church of England. After as few compliments as possible, I set to work to pump him systematically. His origin was Sayud, and his family, he said, had been established in Van in the days of Sultan Orchan-ibn-Othman. He told me that he had the keys of a library of 3,000 volumes in a large *tekke* near Van ; it contained no books in any other script save Arabic, but there were perhaps forty or fifty volumes in Kurdish, several works on divination and magic, and one on the Albanian method of drawing auguries from the bones of lambs. As regards the country, he expressed no opinion derogatory to the government, but he could not help telling me how he and Shaykh Mohammed Sadik had proposed with the Vali and English Consul to establish a steamer on Lake Van, and how the government had refused to sanction the scheme. As regards the tribes, one thing he told me struck me as strange, namely, that according to local traditions the Jenwis of Khoshab were Franks. He had no theories or ideas as to the origin of the Kurds, save that he was sure they had never been Christians but were *majusi*, or worshippers of fire—a fact of which all Kurds were ashamed but well aware.

The Pasha was a man of a progressive turn of mind, having provided his sons with bicycles, dressed them in European clothes, and purchased English agricultural implements. He said, however, that it was no use doing these things alone, as

when the implements and bicycles got broken no one could mend them. He was a little despondent as to the future of his district, as he said that it would be many years before any railways could be built there and meanwhile there was no outlet for produce. He was eager to know whether it was true that the Mikado had thoughts of becoming a Moslem, and when I demonstrated the difficulty of this, he seemed very depressed and kept repeating, "Unless a whole people are of one mind the leader cannot change his views—it is impossible!"

As far as I could ascertain, Shaykh Hamid Pasha is extremely beloved by all his acquaintances, and no one has an ill-word to speak of him. His political importance is difficult to gauge; religious persons have, as a rule, no influence on tribal squabbles, and can do very little to check local rapine and misdeeds, save in the way of friendly arbitration. On the other hand, their influence in great matters such as a massacre of Christians, a frontier dispute, a combined movement of the tribes, is often immense, and I should not be surprised if this was the case with Shaykh Hamid Pasha.

The company in the tent was varied and interesting—Hamidieh colonels, government officers and two or three notables from Sairt and Van. Among the latter was a younger brother of Shaykh Nasr-ed-din, of Tillu, a person whose forefathers had obtained their estates in the days of Sultan Selim. They claimed to be of Abbasid descent, and their representative certainly spoke the most beautiful and correct Arabic, which he said he had learned from his parents.

From Bashkala we rode to a miserable village named Takhurawa, a place of awful poverty, where a wretched crew of Kurds cut corn in October, and are clothed in frosty weather with scarcely enough rags to cover their nakedness. Yet I must add that these poor wretches neither begged nor stole, and have neither missionaries nor consuls to care for them. They may rot or die or starve, for they are miscreants for whom Europe has no pity; for them, perhaps this is just as well, for an injudicious application of relief might not improve matters materially, and would probably turn them into a snivelling race of harpies, without even a Mark Tapleyan sense of humour to uphold them. Still I cannot help thinking of Mesopotamia and

Musa Bey el Abbasieh.

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its fruitful acres waiting for these poor people; perhaps those ragged children of Takhurawa may in manhood sit basking in the hot sun of the Jazirah gazing over a golden sea of grain ripening in early May. These mountain Kurds of the border are not idlers; every hill has its canal, and their knowledge of irrigation points to a southern school of dark antiquity.

From Takhurawa to Diza is a short ride of six hours. The great jagged peaks of Julamerik and Hakkiari, which have been bobbing up on the skyline for some days now, came fairly into view, looking grand and terrible in their awful solitude and barrenness. Diza is half town, half village, situated on the edge of a great valley plain containing many Nestorian and a few Armenian villages. The Chaldaean priest of the place was a splendid example of the excellent work achieved by the Dominicans of Mosul. The man was a southerner from Mosul. He spoke French correctly and fluently; he could write well and talk well, and also could think without difficulty—by which I mean to say that he did not repeat a parrot-cry to gain time, think a bastard book-robbed thought, and then belch out some banality from a newspaper article, the meaning of which he did not understand. No, he had a brain, and betwixt the thoughts therein and his organs of speech there was proper correspondence, so that the result was conversation such as I hear from Englishmen, Frenchmen, Kurdish Aghas and Bedawin. The man had been fully educated; his mind had been formed, not wrecked.

From Diza we proceeded to Gulanik, the seat and castle of Musa Bey el Abbasieh. Between Diza and Gulanik the journey is of little interest, for the road for the most part skirts along the banks of a morass, a nest of fever in summer and a dismal mass of brown sedge in autumn. After passing a spur, however, we at length entered real Kurdistan, for was there not a valley between rocky peaks, were there not dwarf oaks, were there not flocks and terraced fields, did we not hear the sharp, strident cries of the shepherds calling to one another from the hills, and a little way down the valley did we not see the well-built, turreted castle of an Agha?

Musa Bey claims Arabian descent and calls himself Abbasieh, perhaps for no better reason than that his forefathers filched

some black-eyed girls from Baghdad when the last Caliphs were tottering to their fall. He was a sad-faced man, who received us kindly enough, but apparently with a heavy heart. Everything he could do as a host he did, but one could see that there was some secret trouble which he was nursing in his breast. Presently the tale came out.

Ever since time was, the Abbasieh and the family of Obeidullah had been at enmity. After old Obeidullah was crushed, the government had offered the safeguarding of the Persian defiles to Musa Bey. Stipulating that he should be paid a certain sum for his services, Musa Bey left his village and migrated to Shemsdinan, where he built a castle. When he had spent his money, he found that the pay was not forthcoming, and that Shaykh Sadik reigned alongside him and was almost as powerful as his father had been. Consequently Musa Bey could scarcely hold his own, and only by dint of continued fighting could he manage to maintain his position. Once and only once had he tried to make his peace with Sadik ; for this attempt ended in a poisoned cup, a wild ride of agony to Urumiah in search of a doctor, and a swearing of unending feud. We left Musa Bey as we had found him, clutching his rifle and glaring at the mountains which concealed the villages of his foe.

The ride to Khatuna took us through a densely populated and well cultivated country inhabited by a ragged and seemingly unhealthy population, whose yellow faces reminded me somewhat of the stricken inhabitants of Sassun. Khatuna is situated at the head of a broad valley, and at first appears to be only a little insignificant village, until, after passing a guard-house with a bastion turret, one suddenly comes upon a large square stone house with red-tin gables. This hideous structure is the dwelling of the great Shaykh Sadik, the son of Obeidullah. It is not a residence, but merely a depôt for merchandise, contraband tobacco, rifles and illicit odds and ends which the rapacious owner can cram into his maw.

We were saluted by a brisk young Armenian, who said (it afterwards proved false) that he was employed as tutor to the Shaykh's sons. He accused Prof. Rendel Harris of having promised him assistance, and then breaking his word. He longed to embrace Mr. Bryce—I should have experienced some

KURDS OF SHAYKH SADIK'S "ARMY."

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pleasure in seeing him accomplish this wish; he had a great admiration for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman; he said he was studying to be an ethnologist, psychologist, hypnotist and poet; he admired Renan, Kant, Herbert Spencer, Gladstone, Spurgeon, Nietzsche and Shakespeare. It afterwards appeared that his library consisted of an advertisement of Eno's Fruit Salt, from which he quoted freely. He wept over what he called the "punishment of our great nation," and desired to be informed how in existing circumstances he could elevate himself to greatness and power. When I learnt that this blithering jack-ass was the Shaykh's business adviser, I began to form a peculiar estimate of the Shaykh himself. This odious pest of an Armenian never left my side from the moment I arrived. He clung to me and babbled tedious nonsense into my ear from dawn till dark, until at last I grew more than weary. Through the medium of this idiot the Shaykh himself sent down a long rigmarole, as to the truth of which I cared not a pin, concerning the Vali of Van, who was supposed to have told the Shaykh to pretend to be ill and not to see me. In consequence of this, I had to go through the farce of seeing the Shaykh after dark.

I found him a ridiculous figure in a purple fur coat with a night-cap and tassel round which was wound a turban. His face was strange enough and perhaps gave some expression of the character of the man—the blue eyes of a wondering child, gentle and smiling, the nose of a vulture, and a hideous cavernous slit of a mouth, that shut as cruelly as a rat-trap and opened in a sloppy, sensual grin. Frame such a face as this in a purple beard, bar-sinister it with a thin straggling moustache, and you have Shaykh Sadik. Of politics he did not talk: medical advice for his son was what he first sought, and that was certainly to his credit. Secondly, he demanded to be put on to a "good thing" in the City. Banks were absurd—2 per cent., 3 per cent., even 3½ per cent. interest was ridiculous; what he wanted was a safe 15 per cent. He admired Europeans: he loved Europeans. Were there no railways, no companies which could recompense him as he deserved? He produced prospectuses of various tempting kinds – "any sum from £36 to £5,000 in town or country." That was good—10 per cent. per annum on

five years' notice of withdrawal; that was splendid, but why five years? Did I not think these things good? I told him I thought them very bad: the Shaykh said they were very tempting. I suggested the Deutsche Bank, hoping to do Germany a bad turn; the Shaykh flushed with anger. "Only 2 per cent.?" he bubbled, holding up two podgy fingers, on one of which was a diamond of great value.

In this wise the evening wore on—nothing but stocks, shares, companies, and so forth—and through it all the vacuous bleatings of the Armenian who pretended to act as interpreter. Finally, the Shaykh propounded the following problem. Companies were better than banks. In the first place they often gave high rates of interest; in the second place they gave you coupons and pieces of paper which you could sell or keep by you, whereas banks not only gave you no interest to speak of, but Heaven only knew how much profit they might not be making out of your money. Now would a good English bank, say Coutts', mind Shaykh Sadik sending his Armenian servant to inspect their books once a quarter, and see how much they really owed him, because of course they ought to give more than 3 per cent.? Then the Shaykh wanted to know who would buy his contraband tobacco. Could he get a good price at Bombay? Could he send it to London? Would the English government buy it? All of which showed that with all the ingenuousness of a baby the Shaykh had only one object in life, namely, to make as much money as possible.

His house is not a well-ordered establishment, and is as dirty as any wretched *khan*. Large caravans are continually coming to and fro with merchandise from Persia, which apparently is all unloaded at the back door, duty free, and stowed away. The interior of the hall is one mass of goods of every description. Singer's sewing machines, scales, harrows, bales of silk, tobacco, corn, rice, encumber the whole place. Sitting on the merchandise is a crowd of brigand-like Kurds, Jews, and muleteers. At intervals little parties go away on various errands—to rob, to collect rents, to escort caravans, to dispose of stolen goods, and so forth. All the Shaykh's men and dependants—save three or four of his highest officers, such as the butler and the general—are miserably clad and seem to receive hardly any pay except in

food, while in a room above the Shaykh sits with 60 *rotls* (300 lbs.) of gold, not daring to venture forth.

The ridiculous hypocrisy which prompts Shaykh Sadik to say that his establishment is a religious and charitable institution is only on a par with the rest of his childish villainy. It is said that when he leaves Khatuna for Neheri the operation is performed at night, when he sallies out with his money bags and appears suddenly at Neheri, where he ensconces himself securely for the winter, during which season, as there is but little traffic, he can safely leave his depôt at Khatuna to look after itself.

Once while I was sitting and bathing with heroic fortitude in the unending stream of cackle which issued from the Armenian, the Shaykh's under-butler came in and asked me if I could do him a favour. Fifteen unfortunate men who had been sent by the Shaykh to collect rents in Zebar had been seized by an inhuman government and clapped into prison without trial. A little investigation soon brought to light the fact that they were a band of marauding thieves, whose handiwork I had seen soon after their apprehension : burnt villages, ruined houses, beggared peasants and general destruction over an area of perhaps eight square miles, was the trifle for which they were responsible.

From Khatuna we proceeded without regret to Neheri, a wretched town of mud dominated by another enormous square building of stone, in which Shaykh Sadik hides during the winter. From Neheri we rode to Benawan in five-and-a-half hours, through splendid scenery. Here the Girdi begin, and I suggest that these Baba Kurds are a different race from those of the interior mountains and lake district. Their tradition is that they came from Irak about one hundred years ago, at which time they were semi-nomadic. The only point of resemblance in dress that they bear to the southern Kurds is in their turban—a blue cloth wound round a pointed red cap with a tassel hanging from it.

From Benawan we rode out of the Girdi country into that of the Shirwan, camping the night at Dereyazor, a small and wretched village amidst rich and well-cultivated fields. On our way thither we met three Jews travelling unarmed with various goods. They were members of the great Hakkiari community, who live in the towns and villages of that district. These Jews,

whose residence in this part of the country is of great antiquity, are practically immune from robbery, and can travel in their own districts without fear. Like their co-religionists elsewhere, they amass wealth where other people would starve. One of my acquaintance, a muleteer owning three beasts, had no less than £T1000 of savings.

The scenery through which we passed during the day was as wild and impressive as any I have encountered in Kurdistan. Each village has its little forest of poplars, its carefully laid-out fields, its elaborate system of mountain canals and irrigation works, and, above all, its little castle with two salient turrets, in which the headman resides and whither the fighting forces of the village take refuge in times of danger. These hamlets vary in size from perhaps ten to fifty houses, and are situated usually on the slope of a mountain overlooking a junction of valleys.

From Dereyazor we set out full of hope and lightness of heart for Rezan, fondly hoping to get there before night. At the village of Geyler, however, we found an Agha with a waggling head and a face of great solemnity.

"Bad news," he mumbled; "Shaykh Berzan of Berzan, and Ahmed Agha of Shirwan, and Hassan Agha and Sulaiman Agha of Zebar, and the Herki shepherds, are all fighting. There are *zaptiehs*, and fears and tremblings, and everyone is an enemy. Four soldiers have been killed and eight rifles taken, and all roads are closed. As for Rezan, it is impossible. Ahmed Agha is there waiting to fight everybody else."

It was therefore with some anxiety that I asked the captain of the escort what we should do. The captain, whose appearance was that of a retired Crimean colonel, was made a prisoner at Kars, had twice been desperately wounded, always talked in a hoarse, toothless voice, always seemed in a furious passion, though really in the best of humours. In reply to my question he wheezed, and grumbled, and mumbled, and chuckled out the following remarks—or rather, remarks of which the following is a free translation; it must be remembered that the staccato phraseology of Mr. Jingle goes even better in Arabic.

"Fact is, Kurds are dogs—all dogs—all liars—all thieves—all dam' cowards. I don't know this country—you don't know this country—desert—rubbish—muck. Kurds here—Kurds there.

One Kurd sees another Kurd—kills him—humph, very well, one dog dead, another left alive. We stop here—Kurds think we're frightened—they shoot—we shoot—they go on shooting—they kill me—that ends my responsibility. We go on—people see us—all get frightened—all shoot—shoot me—that ends my responsibility again. We go round to Rowandiz. You get very cross—lady gets very cross—I get very cross—nobody pleased. Where you want to go to, say. I'm ready to take orders—can't give any because I know no more than you, except I don't know what you want to do—man can only die once, and when he dies he's dead—very!"

With such a light-hearted veteran as this for company, it seemed easy enough to take some risks, so we set out for the village of Ahmed Agha, though I certainly felt some qualms as we neared the loopholes of his castle. Happily no one seemed particularly excited when we entered the village, but there was news in plenty. Hassan Agha of Zebar had been robbing the Shirwan Kurds; and Shaykh Berzan of Berzan, a Sayud, had been to Akra to complain to the Kaimakam on behalf of the Shirwan. The Kaimakam, however, had eaten the money of Hassan Agha, and refused to listen to Shaykh Berzan. When Shaykh Berzan was on his way home, Hassan Agha had made an attempt to assassinate him. The result had been fighting, during which government soldiers had been killed. The Kaimakam and two hundred men had gone to Zebar, and had burnt five villages of the Shirwan—or rather had kept off reliefs while the Herki burnt them, for the Herki Kochars had been brought in by the Kaimakam to do the job. Ahmed Agha was at the river at Rezan, and intended to prevent anyone crossing from Hassan Agha's side.

The problem now was how we should approach Rezan without causing Ahmed Agha to think that we had come to attack him. The veteran of Kars was again to the fore.

"All Kurds are dogs—Ahmed Agha's a dog—very well—Kaimakam's a dog—dam', shameless, misbelieving, corrupt dog. Dogs fight—dogs bite—but only other dogs. We are lions. We go down to Rezan—Ahmed Agha kisses your hand—English Pasha come to beat Kaimakam. We cross the river—Kaimakam kisses your hand—English Consul come to report.

Everyone kisses your hand. You go to Akra—go to Mosul—tell Vali. All Kurds are dogs and all Kaimakams swine. This Kaimakam is Vali's cousin — Vali is a dog, but everyone frightened of you—therefore proceed—ease! comfort! honour! glory!"

The advice bespoke a complete grasp of the situation and the next day we followed it, sending, however, a man before us to inform the rebellious Agha of our coming. For six hours we rode through a string of empty villages, deserted of all able-bodied men, and containing only toothless old men, women, and children. Towards evening we reached the heights above Rezan. Here we found empty cartridge cases and pools of blood. "Ha! ha!" laughed the old captain. "One dog died here—'nother there—damn them both." On the other side of the river we counted five smoking patches, none other than the remains of the Shirwan villages. A little further on we met Ahmed Agha and fifty gunmen. The Agha was a tall, handsome old man, with a pathetic and harassed expression. He pointed sadly to the smoking ruins beyond the river, and showed us the wretched burnt-out inhabitants, collecting wood and stones with which to build fresh houses. He told us a thing which I knew to be true—that when the tribes fought among themselves, no damage was done to fixed property; but that when the government troops assisted, the tribesmen were always apt to go to excess, being no longer bound by their own unwritten laws. When I saw this devastation, I began to think of the advantages of centralised government over feudal times.

The next morning we forded the river, which was running breast-high, and inspected one of the ruined villages. The place was deserted, the crops had been left standing, and we found a boy and a poor old woman picking amongst the embers for some scraps which might have escaped the general wreckage. Further on in the mountains we met numbers of Herki Kurds, nomads of the lowest type, who had come at the bidding of the Kaimakam to ravage and devastate the cultivated gardens of the industrious villagers. The last time I was here the government troops were employed in driving away these very nomads, who had nearly gutted the district of Shahbinar.



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AHMED AGHA

A few more years of this intelligent procedure and most of Eastern Kurdistan will be empty.

It is well to note that though Shaykh Sadik is a wretched, miserly old fool, yet his territory is habitable and well-populated, simply because under his rule men can live and defend their property, and are not egged on to mutual self-destruction in order to fill the pockets of some Constantinople jack-in-office.

We cross-examined the Herki, who made no secret of the fact that they had been called up by the Kaimakam to help him to crush the Shaykh of Berzan. They themselves admitted the cruelty of burning villages, and said it was a shame. That night we camped amidst a crowd of them. When on the march in autumn, they pitch no tents, but simply put up screens of matting, behind which they sleep. The Herki are a low and dirty tribe; they possess large flocks, and a great quantity of inferior pack-horses, which they sell.

From Dinati we rode to Akra, thus passing from Kurdistan into Irak. The extraordinary and sudden change is indeed a marvel, which by no means lessens on a second view. When the traveller reaches the head of the pass, he finds himself facing the huge brown plains of northern Mesopotamia. Mile upon mile they stretch out to the south, until at last they are lost in a thin, light haze of distance, in which the Zerguezavand Dagh, seventy miles to the south, and the Sinjar, a hundred miles to the south-west, flicker and quiver in a faint, dim tint of grey. Behind him, riven, rent, sharp, and hard, stand the grim grey mountains of Kurdistan, in crags and walls, or confused masses of rocks, boulders, and tip-tilted strata, torn by abysmal valleys, split and cracked by sheer gorges, twisted and seamed by tortuous gullies, darkened and mystified by masses of swart stunted oak. Thus, behind him he sees greens and greys in every shade and shape, shadows hard and dark, fountains and streams noisy and rushing, caves, grottoes, grotesque steeple-crowned rocks, in a very profligacy of variety; while before, one universal sea of brown and buff, heaving here and there into humped mounds, sinking into gradual depressions, or faintly lined by sluggish leaden streams.

Down into that sea we descended—down, down, to Akra, the last town of Kurdistan; and Akra is Kurdish indeed. It

clings lovingly to the rock, and with the dread of a mountaineer for flat open spaces seems to draw its houses away from the plain. At last we reached the low countries, and set out south-west into the heart of Irak. A greater contrast could not be imagined than that between the lands 'twixt Mosul and Akra, and Akra and Neri. The villages are of mud instead of stone, the people are brown instead of pale, tall and lean instead of short and stout, the landscape being at the same time utterly different from the great beech forests of the coast, the dreary, barren highlands of Asia Minor, or the cataclysmal mountains of Kurdistan. Space, distance, infinite and immeasurable, is the keynote of Assyrian landscape—a low blue mountain range, perhaps forty miles away; a minaret at four leagues' distance; a patch of brown village twenty furlongs off; and between these objects a rolling stretch of almost imperceptible undulations, intersected here and there by a winding path of little ridges, the tracks and trails of centuries of caravans and wayfarers.

Eighteen hours through such land as this brought us within scent of the stinks of Mosul. When I reached Mosul I realised that Anatolia was not the East. For four months I had not heard that ear-piercing din of Arabian conversation; I had not been rendered sick by a thousand stenches; I had not been plagued by a myriad flies buzzing from offal-pits; I had not seen wretched over-loaded donkeys and mules tortured and beaten; I had not heard the dismal wail of neglected children; I had not heard the wheezy plaints of lepers and hideously maimed beggars; I had not felt the fiery breath of a tropical sun, or walked through bazaars dark and reeking at midday, or fought my way through crowds of effeminate, querulous, shrieking, disorderly men, or heard the strident cries of women on the house-tops, or been jostled by strings of bubbling, split-lipped camels. These things are of the East and Mosul, and not of Anatolia.

Mosul, the town of cement, ruins, and pestilence, is in autumn, as in summer and winter and spring, a curse, a blight, and a blot on the face of the world. Yet at sunset, looking westward from the village of Nebi Yunis, I could have forgotten much of its evil. The sun was setting in a blaze of deep, dying fire;

mysterious and silent the Tigris flowed between dark brushwood banks; and beyond it stood the city—a wonder of blue and purple shadow, the domes curved above the straight flat roofs. The ruinous purlieus were lost in growing night; the minarets seemed endowed with a grace and tallness unbelievable at mid-day; the strident din of the bazaars was lost in a confused murmur; now and again the wooden bridge rattled with the hollow sound of hoofs; and Mosul, the vicious, disreputable and irreclaimable, stood for a moment a vision which a Turner would have burnt all his works to paint.

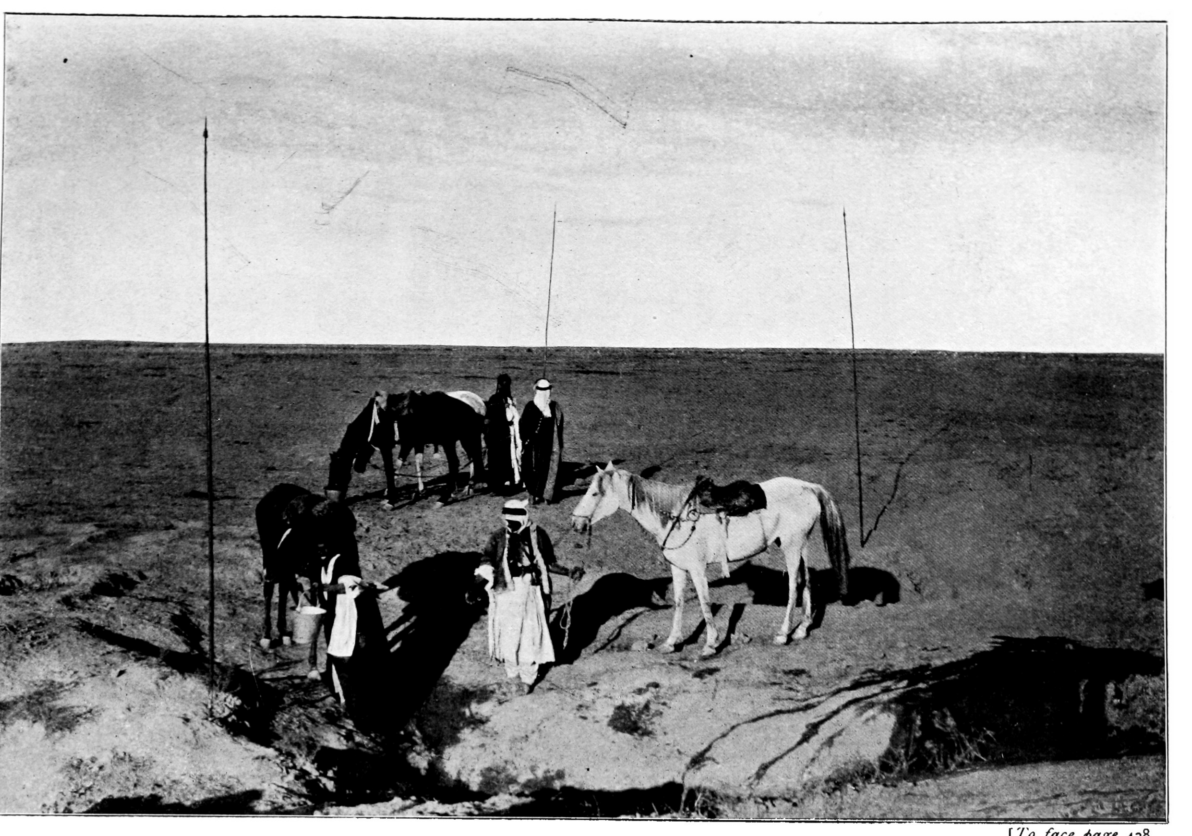
At our second coming Mosul was in the hands of Mustafa Pasha, the brother of Izzet, the Sultan's secretary. The brother of Izzet had not distinguished himself. He filled the province with his relations, extorted money right and left, mismanaged every affair entrusted to him, and was an object of ridicule and hatred. He was of the Palace, a negro slave his chief confidant, and his conduct savoured of the place whence he comes. Ignorance, craft, insolence, and weakness are the very virtues of Byzantium and those infected by its atmosphere, and such a man as Mustafa Pasha was an excellent example of a "Palace man." He is as different from the ordinary Turkish official of rank as would be the porter of a brothel from the secretary of a large London club. The ordinary Vali is at least dignified. He may be rapacious, but he conceals his rapacity. He has also an instinct of command. He may dislike Christians, but he does not enter into theological discussions with various local dignitaries of the church. But in a "Palace man" shameless tyranny is combined with childish buffoonery and weakness. In the Palace such qualities are unnoticed; but outside they are distinctly observable, and the miserable figure cut by the brother of the second secretary is, perhaps, an example of what may be the conduct of the present occupants of Yildiz when the owner breathes his last.

Once again back to Tell-'Afar, where I notice that the Turks dress even as the Yezidis, save for the square cut at the neck. Thence we went out into the arable desert. In eight hours we passed three ruined villages and two occupied, the last being Ain-el-Ghazal, where there is a mill. The Asi are camped an hour away, and there are many rumours of hideous war. One

of Ferhan's innumerable sons called on us that evening, having been told by El Asi, his brother, to bid us to his tents, an invitation we were sorry enough not to be able to accept.

The next day we pushed on to El Bedieh, where the Bedawin have sunk wells in a dry *wadi*, and have found salt water, just drinkable. While we were there seven Bedawin with lances galloped up amid a storm of dust. They roared and laughed like maniacs among themselves, and one old fellow, who looked at least sixty, skipped about among the wells, yelping and threatening like a mad schoolboy. At first we could not make out what they were trying to do, but at length they explained to us, all breathless, that they had been racing to choose water-holes for their tribe, who were coming the next day to camp. Each man represented a party of tents, and came to mark a well for his own people. After our tents had been pitched the whole posse announced they were our guests, and looked to us for food and lodging. It was explained to them that the contrary was the case, but we gave them some wheat porridge for which they returned moderate thanks.

The Bedawi is, indeed, the strangest of all mankind. His material civilisation is about on a par with that of a bushman, yet his brain is as elaborately and subtly developed as that of any Englishman with a liberal education. There is no reasonable argument he cannot follow, no situation which he cannot immediately grasp, no man whom he cannot comprehend; yet there is no manual act he can perform. These seven could not cook their dinners without help, saying that their women were absent. Had they been alone, they would have gone to sleep supperless, or eaten a mouthful of raw flour. How different from the Kurd, whose hands are ever ready and busy, but whose mind has many closed doors and blocked-up passages! A Kurd is the simplest and most gullible of mortals. His fear of a man who can read the Koran is piteous; his wickedness the wickedness of a wild animal; his uninquisitiveness great; his industry immense. A Bedawi on the other hand is greatly inquiring, ever interested, yet his inquiries and interest, though intense, are completely abstract. He will wonder how you can take his photograph, ask how it is done, roughly understand the theory of photography, and return to his mouthful of raw flour.



El Bedieh.

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The Kurd, if he be rich, will try to buy your camera, it is true; but if he does buy it, he will throw it aside if he cannot work it by a simple rule of thumb. That this intense practicalness on one side and unproductive intelligence on the other has, by intermarriage, produced Salah-ed-din, Edrisi, and Ibrahim Pasha is not surprising. The two races seem undoubtedly destined for amalgamation, and if this ever takes place on a large scale, the world will be the richer by a magnificent people.

Eight hours over flat, sandy desert took us to Abu Hamda, where there was a sunset to dream of. The next morning we pushed on to the great castle of Shedade, the population being represented by one fat sergeant, two ancient and toothless police, and two Armenian merchants, who keep a kind of general supply store, which serves as a club for desert people. The fact that these two men can live in perfect security in such a place may serve to give some insight into desert affairs, and may also help to dispel any fears as to the coming of the railway being in the least hindered by the ferocious tribesmen.

I am inclined to suggest a new track for the Baghdad line—from Mardin south to Shedade, and thence across to Mosul. My reasons for making this suggestion are first, that the cost of construction would be far less, as for the better part of the way the rails could be laid on the flat; secondly, it would give the Kurds of the Karaja Dagh the opportunity of settling, and would develop immediately the interior waters of the Jazirah. Further, it would tap the corn-growing districts of the Yezidis of Sinjar. That the development of the interior of the Jazirah should come first, is, I suggest, of the utmost importance. My reasons are as follows. The agriculture between Mosul and Baghdad, though not flourishing, is well under way. Between Nisibin and Mosul the land is to a certain extent populated. Now, should the proposed railway take the eastern side of the Sinjar, the tendency will be to migrate eastwards, and the floating agricultural population will be speedily absorbed. The building of a branch line from Mardin to Deir would probably be under discussion for many years before it was accomplished, and all that time the rich lands on the banks of the Khabur would be lying idle. If, on the other hand, the line takes the course I have suggested, the present inhabitants of the Tigris

banks will still benefit considerably, for the most remote will be situated within forty miles of the line, at Tell-'Afar, and an equal distance from Nisibin, while the whole trend of agriculture will be diverted to its proper central channels, and led away from the fringe of the Mardin hills, whither it has been driven by Arab incursion. Thus, if the central line is followed, we may expect to see a chain of villages and fields some hundred miles in length, where at present there are not above twenty permanent dwellings. Such a course would also save Deir, a town of about twenty thousand inhabitants, from the ruin which has overtaken Ladik, for it would still remain a central depôt for all grain as far south as Anah. It could be connected with Shedade by plenty of cheap wheeled traffic, and its surplus population would serve as a good means of filling up the gaps along the Khabur. The line I have suggested would also afford a good opening for the development of the banks of the Belikh, which are only four days by camel caravan from Shedade.

In view of the agricultural development of northern Mesopotamia I have to make another suggestion, which personally I imagine touches upon a question of some importance. For the present irrigation from the actual natural waterways will occupy to the full all agricultural effort, without embarking on any schemes of reclamation or reconstruction of ancient canals, which naturally will not be undertaken until the rough lines of the population have been sketched out. Such being the case, there will remain in hand the great central tracts of grazing land, which are at present occupied by the nomad shepherds. Now such of these as choose to continue in their present avocation will form, as they did in the first century A.D., one of the economic assets of northern Mesopotamia. There will undoubtedly be ample room for them to live and thrive side by side with the agriculturists; but much heartburning and grief and subsequent quarrelling and police work will be rendered unnecessary, if the authorities insist on men following either a completely pastoral or completely agricultural avocation. If the fellahin have flocks, they will instantly become embroiled with the purely pastoral tribes, and the latter will always be able to inflict damage on agriculture and retard the progress of the district. Sedentary peoples following a pastoral life become

idle and demoralised, their existence gradually becomes uneconomic, and they drift into a form of beggary or serfdom, from which there is no escape but disintegration by emigration.

The natural state of northern Mesopotamia, which it is the business of modern science to restore, was undoubtedly maintained from about 150 B.C. until the ruinous days of Timur. It consisted in the perfection and ultra-development of agriculture of all kinds, along the waterways and the canals leading off them; the establishment of great central trading towns along those waterways; and the employment of the intervening steppes between the rivers and canals to support a considerable pastoral population, who depended entirely on the towns for luxuries, tents, saddlery, etc., and on the agriculturists for food. The numerous and motley array with which Surenas destroyed the army of Crassus was numerically equal to the gathered horsemen of Mesopotamia of to-day, and the tactics were those of a *ghazu*. El Hadhr was an enormous centre of pastoral wealth, and derived the whole of its importance from the flocks of its Bedawin tribes. Briefly, what has happened to Mesopotamia is that in the course of time the agricultural population has been scattered and the pastoral has remained—not, indeed, to the gain of the latter, as the wretched equipment and personal effects of the modern Mesopotamian Bedawin show, when compared with the magnificent array exhibited by the nomad horse, whether in the descriptions of Plutarch, or Abu'l Feda, or even when set side by side with the men of Ibrahim Pasha, whose connection with the new Armenian settlement at Viranshehr is in part a return to the old settlement, where under one rule an independent agriculture supports and shares the profits with a dependent or adjunctive nomadism.

At Manaieh I camped for the first time with the great tribe of the Shammar Arabs, and I must say that a more rapacious, greedy, ill-mannered set of brutes it would be hard to find. These animals are, unluckily, pure Bedawi, and have not been tinctured with either Turkish or Kurdish blood, which always has a softening and civilising effect on these desert tramps. As the Shammar are pure in blood, so they exhibit in a more marked degree the standing Bedawi vices—hyprocrisy, rudeness, and a lack of common hospitality being the more notable. The

Shaykh's son, who is said to be half mad but is aided and abetted by his younger brother, spent the evening in shouting for food in my cook's tent, and in boasting of his devotion to his guests in mine. Kurds and fellahin Arabs are hospitable, kind, and gracious ; but the Shammar Bedawin, being a sort of cross between a gypsy mountebank and a Jew money-lender, has none of these characteristics. He knows that desert law and life necessitate hospitality, consequently his Semitic leanings force him to make it his whole business to try to avoid observing it, while endeavouring to extract the last free grain of rice and the last gratuitous dreg of coffee he can squeeze out of the observance. On the other hand the mountebank strain, which is strongly developed in the desert man, obliges him to boast and lie and brag about his chivalry, prowess, bravery, and open-handedness, until either the savoury scent in the guest's kitchen, or the chink of silver, awakens his dormant Semitism, whereupon he bellows for food or money as if he had been robbed of it.

Between Shedade and the Euphrates, strangely enough, lies a comparatively large tract of so-called desert, which is as little known as the inmost recesses of the Sahara. Why this should be the case it is hard to understand. However, it is so, and it was with some trepidation that I asked the fat sergeant at Shedade for an escort to traverse it. All the Bedawin and Baggara Arabs whom I questioned as to the route pulled the gloomiest and glummest faces at the mere thought of such a journey—forty-thousand *wadis*, forty-thousand mountains, pits, morasses, fears, evildoers, wicked tribes, and so forth. When we once got under way, however, the difficulties vanished with great rapidity ; and it seems very wonderful to me that in the barren month of November this desolate region boasts no less than five permanent wells, and supports a population of about twenty thousand Bedawin.

The most picturesque moment in a Bedawin camp is undoubtedly about five minutes after sunset—just as the western sky is undergoing that subtle, sudden, but gentle change, and the red glow of the dying day is merging into that strange half-blue, half-green tinge which is the herald of the coming night ; when the brown, dusty horizon suddenly darkens towards the

brightest part of the heavens; when in the still light sky a single star may be seen, the glimmer a tiny point of brightness. It is then that the smoke rises, drifting and swaying amid the black squat tents, while white-robed children still cry and romp amidst the cooling dust, and a shrill harridan voice calls them from the distance. It is then you will hear a voice from the now fast-deepening shades, crying, "Oho! Oho! Ohoh! Ohoh! —Ohoh!" in a chant monotonous yet pleasing. Presently the meaning of this cry becomes plain. Strange figures, grotesque and weird, appear upon the sky-line, slowly, solemnly sauntering to the voice. Sometimes a group will form upon the horizon, a black, chaotic clump of heads and humps, supported on a dense forest of legs. This dissolves into its component parts, and the camels scatter, each to its master and its home. Here and there a gurgling truant will halt and grumble on his way; then, seized with an ungainly fit of merriment, cut a brace of capers, and then shuffle silently on, his head swaying with a bridling, supercilious dignity. Still from all quarters the camels continue to come, in tens, in hundreds, and in thousands; each noiselessly appearing, a vision of wonder against the sky; then descending and vanishing, a shadow among shadows. Gradually the shuffling footsteps die down; the muttered grumblings and the cries of the herdsmen cease; tents merge into the blackness of the earth; the fires change from smoking lights to sharp patches of flame; the stars shine brightly; and it is night. Night in the desert differs from night in town and country inasmuch as, instead of being a signal for evildoers to pour forth and prowl upon their business, it is a time of truce and peace 'twixt man and man. From sunset to sunrise neither attacks nor raids are made, and men on a *ghazu* will sleep within a couple of miles of their enemies without so much as posting a sentry.

The Shammar we found an unpleasant crew of greedy, whining beggars, the like of which we had not encountered since the Mush plain. We asked to see their mares, and such a collection of jades as were produced could hardly be equalled out of the yard of a London knacker. Weedy foals, tun-bellied old mares, and broken-down stallions were the kind of cattle these desert nobles wished to foist on us. The son

of the Shaykh, a pock-marked youth, announced himself as my host and my brother; then demanded food, and stayed the whole night in my servant's tent, pestering and boring everyone for something to eat. Eventually his clamours became so impertinent that I chose to show my annoyance, whereupon he slid into a kind of grovelling, apologetic manner even more odious than his aggressive mood. Early next morning he came to me and begged for money, actual cash. I gave him ten shillings, which this chief of four hundred horsemen, owner of three thousand camels, lord of a hundred tents, was not ashamed to pocket in full view of his people. Before we left, he begged us to camp at a certain well in the desert; and we afterwards learned that the well was empty, and that this young scoundrel had despatched a party of horsemen to waylay us there. However, like the Magi, we took another road, and so avoided his kind attentions.

In the night 500 Anazeh Arabs crossed the river from the Syrian side and told us they were at war with the Shammar. I have always made it a rule to have nothing to do with tribal squabbles, but on this occasion could not resist giving full and accurate information as to the dispositions of the Shammar, and particularly of the isolated position of the party still waiting for my caravan at Trefawi.

After reaching the Euphrates we thought all trouble and danger was over, and prepared to proceed homewards in a quiet and humdrum way; but we were destined to be rudely surprised. Just before entering Rakka we were met by a band of thirty mounted Circassian emigrants, who quietly rode up to my servant and relieved him of my rifle, and it was only after the most ferocious cursings and roarings that I could persuade them to give it up. The only revenge they took for being relieved of their spoil was to shoot at any birds that flew over our heads. I promised myself some revenge by reporting the matter to the Kaimakam of Rakka, whom I knew, and therefore we hurried to the town as quickly as possible. Again we were surprised by hearing the most appalling uproar in the town, women shrieking on the housetops, guns going off in all directions, men shouting and cursing, and all the accompanying sounds of a battle-royal. A *zaptieh* galloped out saying there

was danger, and accordingly we had to creep round the city by the great ditch which surrounds it, and in which we could ride unobserved. After we had made the circuit of the town, we found our camp pitched at a safe distance, and there learned that the people of the city had profited by the fact that there was only one policeman in the town, and, remembering that a long-standing feud existed between the north and south ends, had endeavoured mutually to wipe off some old scores. Three men were killed, and fifteen badly wounded, before the opposing parties had had enough. What struck me most was the incredible rapidity with which the whole affair took place. At three o'clock the town was quiet, at 3.30 the fight was at its height, and at 4 o'clock, just as we were having tea, the graves of the dead were being filled in. The whole town turned out to the funerals—some 4,000 people, all armed with lances and swords, revolvers, and rifles. They separated into opposite parties, and the relatives of the dead harangued the factions, endeavouring to get them to fight again, but without success; there were too many broken heads, and ammunition was too scarce.

After the crowd had dispersed, the young chief of the Circassians came round and voluntarily apologised—(1) he had thought we were Russians; (2) he had thought my wife was a man, as she was veiled and riding astride. He said he would never have done such a thing as fire over a lady's head to frighten her.

Looking at the ruins of such a town as Rakka, it seems not a little difficult to conjure up a vision of the days of its prosperity. The fragments of Palmyra, Baalbek, or Bosra, instantly fill the imagination with complete, if perhaps inaccurate, pictures. The traveller can hear the metallic tramp of the bronzed and polyglot legionaries, swinging along the almost glassy surface of the paved highways; he can hear the roar of applause rising over the hunched, squat, ponderous walls of the theatres; he can see the people crowding into the magnificent baths, or sauntering on the temple steps; he can hear the snorting and straining of some sleek bull being led to the sacrifice; he can note the scowl of the Bishop, as he hurries past to his already wealthy church; he can see the

brown Bedawi wandering all amazed through the busy market, waiting to buy himself some luxury with the price of the sheep he has sold; and mark the crowds of slaves and prisoners toiling to raise some colossal public building.

But at Rakka, what has his imagination to work upon? A rough circle of mud walls, two minarets, and a mass of broken pottery —no more. Before the town, the river; behind, yellow, hard, arid, bush-spotted desert. Yet, when Palmyra was already no more than a desert station, Rakka was a mighty city, busy, opulent, and populous. Yet what kind of a city? A modern Arab town gives us no hint of the appearance of these great markets of the Caliphate. One of the striking notes of the former is squalor and confusion. A tangle of narrow meandering alleys, with kennels of iridescent cess running down the centre; ragged tattered screens hanging across the less narrow streets; crumbling walls, decayed beams, ruin and desolation in the suburbs—these are the general characteristics of the Arabian towns of the Ottoman Empire. What little can be seen of the outlines of Rakka points to something utterly different. To approach the town the traveller must have ridden through an expanse of orderly and careful culture. From a distance the city must have risen amid a field of verdure; but his imaginative eye must not be impressed by a silhouette of domes and slender minarets, for domes were yet unheard of, and the minarets were stout, square, or round towers, with, I conceive, square tops and no balconies. The city walls were tall, and smoothly systematic; the city within was built on a plan as definite and regular as Chicago, being a perfect circle, divided into a cross by two great highways at right angles; the mosques were solid, simple buildings of a square order of architecture, with façades of slightly pointed arches; the baths again were square blocks, and, I presume, the private houses also; the great palace of the Caliphs was another square building, of perhaps four storeys, with huge beams of wood piercing through the brickwork. And what colours may we give this city? There I may be allowed perhaps a little scope, until I am confounded by superior learning. I will say brown brickwork, and white plaster relieved over every door; a wealth of faïence, pottery,

and tiling of every hue; mosque courts lined with tiles; great square houses with opal belts, minarets with blue bosses, and fountains with dazzling inscriptions. In such a town as this, where regularity and order are the prevailing notes of the design, may we suppose that cleanly streets were a necessity? If so, then conceive a town of brick and lime and tiles, with rigid streets and square houses. Fill it with the life and movement of any modern city between Stambul and Benares; let the air resound with the cries of hawkers and the wailing of muezzins; let the crowd hush and disperse for a moment, as a steel-clad warrior ambles past on the business of the Caliph, and you may or may not have a perfectly incorrect glimpse of a city of the Abbasids. I wonder?

From Rakka across the Euphrates, and in three days to Aleppo; so is our nine months' journey ended where it begun.

## CHAPTER VI

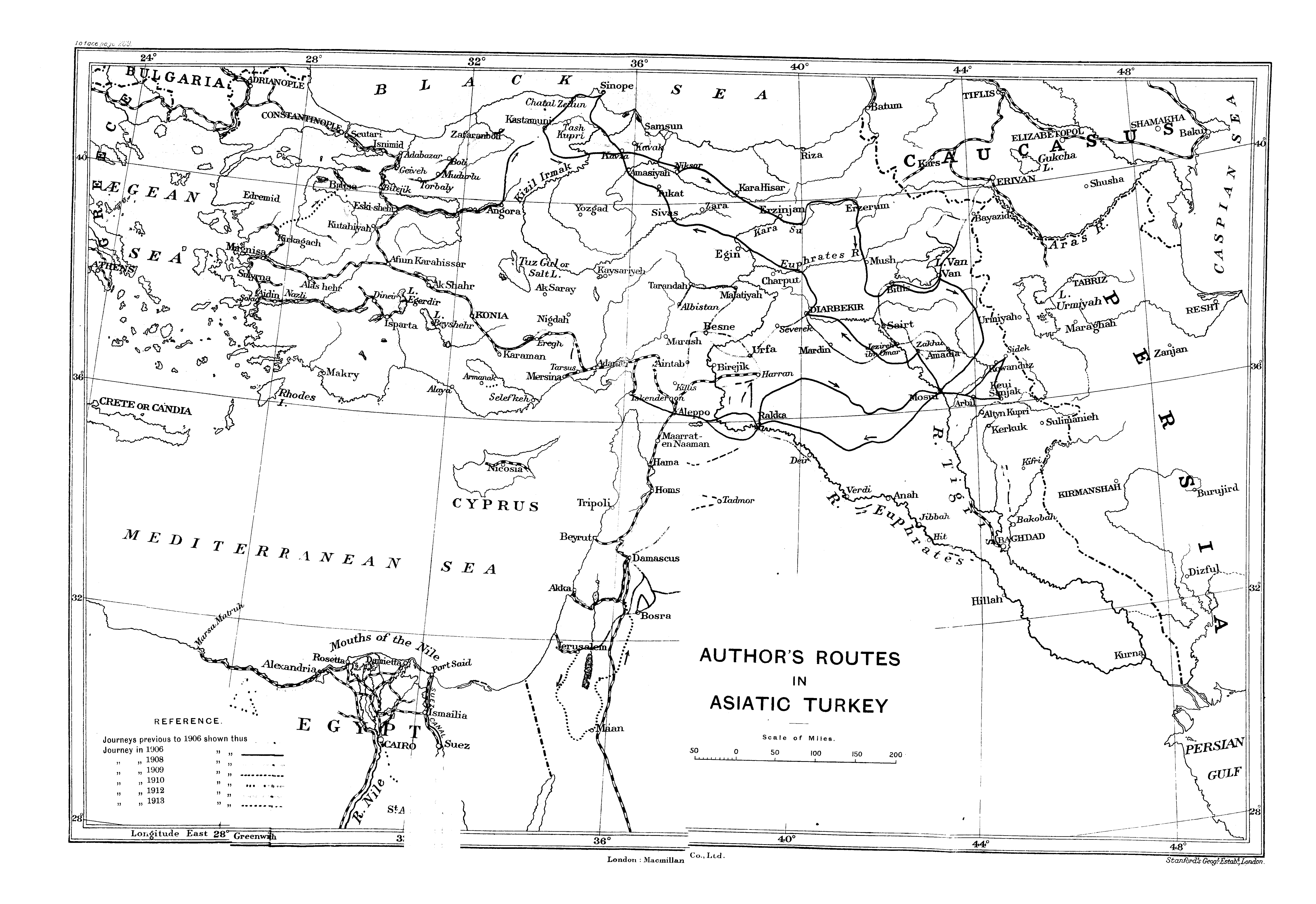
### 1908

In 1908 I decided to make a more thorough exploration of the eastern bend of the Euphrates.

Hama I found a changing city. There can be no doubt that the railway, the origin of which was so enshrouded in scandal and corruption, has been of benefit to the country; and though the "guarantee" may be extortionate and absurd, North Syria has undoubtedly entered upon a fresh epoch since Aleppo was linked up with Rayak.

The town of Hama itself, which had remained in a stationary condition since the Egyptian evacuation in the "'forties," has now taken a definite step forward. There is hardly a street in which houses are not in the course of construction, and around the railway station large granaries, depôts, and yards are being erected by private individuals. The Christians are, of course, loud in their complaints because almost the whole of these improvements are being effected by local Moslem notables, whose accumulated wealth is now being invested in useful ways instead of being hoarded or wasted as in former times. That the Christians have also profited I think there can be little doubt. Though they were loath to admit it, they could not deny that I found them in better circumstances than I did three years ago. Public security seems as good as can be expected, highway robbery is certainly on the decrease, and the recent poor harvest seems to have had no very lasting effect on the country at large.

A rather peculiar fact which I elicited in conversation with various people is that England has suddenly become unpopular


To face page 269.
AUTHOR'S ROUTES
IN
ASIATIC TURKEY
REFERENCE.
Journeys previous to 1906 shown thus
Journey in 1906
" " 1908
" " 1909
" " 1910
" " 1912
" " 1913
Scale of Miles.
50 0 50 100 150 200
Longitude East 28° Greenwich
24°
28°
32°
36°
40°
44°
48°
BLACK SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ÆGEAN SEA
CASPIAN SEA
PERSIAN GULF
CAUCASUS
PERSIA
EGYPT
CYPRUS
BULGARIA
GREECE
CRETE OR CANDIA
Rhodes I.
ADRIANOPLE
CONSTANTINOPLE
Scutari
Isnimid
Adabazar
Geiveh
Boli
Mudurlu
Torbaly
Bilejik
Brusa
Edremid
Eski-shehr
Kutahiyah
Kirkagach
Magnisa
Smyrna
ATHENS
Aidin
Nazli
Alashehr
Afiun Karahissar
Ak Shahr
L. Egerdir
Dineir
Isparta
L. Beyshehr
KONIA
Karaman
Eregh
Nigdah
Ak Saray
Tuz Gul or Salt L.
Kaysariyeh
Angora
Kizil Irmak
Zafaranboli
Kastamuni
Chatal Zeitun
Tash Kupri
Sinope
Samsun
Kavak
Kavza
Amasiyah
Niksar
Tokat
Yozgad
Sivas
Zara
Kara Hisar
Erzinjan
Kara Su
Erzerum
Riza
Batum
TIFLIS
Kars
ELIZABETOPOL
SHAMAKHA
Baku
Gukcha L.
ERIVAN
Shusha
Bayazid
Aras R.
Egin
Euphrates R.
Mush
L. Van
Van
Bitlis
Charput
Malatiyah
Tarandah
Albistan
Besne
Marash
DIARBEKIR
Severek
Sairt
Urfa
Mardin
Jezireh ibn Omar
Zakhu
Amadia
Urmiyah
L. Urmiyah
TABRIZ
Maraghah
RESHT
Zanjan
Sidek
Rowanduz
Keui Sanjak
Arbil
Mosul
Altyn Kupri
Kerkuk
Sulimanieh
Kifri
KIRMANSHAH
Burujird
Bakobah
BAGHDAD
R. Tigris
Dizful
Hillah
Kurna
Birejik
Harran
Killis
Aintab
Adana
Tarsus
Mersina
Selefkeh
Alaya
Armanak
Makry
Iskenderoon
Aleppo
Rakka
Maarrat-en Naaman
Hama
Homs
Deir
Tadmor
Verdi
Anah
Jibbah
Hit
R. Euphrates
Tripoli
Beyrut
Damascus
Akka
Bosra
Jerusalem
Maan
Nicosia
Marsa Matruh
Alexandria
Rosetta
Damietta
Mouths of the Nile
Port Said
Ismailia
Suez Canal
CAIRO
Suez
R. Nile
St. A
London: Macmillan Co., Ltd.
Stanford's Geogl. Estabt., London.

among the townsfolk owing to the recent depreciation of various Egyptian business ventures. It appears that very great numbers of Christians and Moslems of the merchant class have invested and speculated largely in these undertakings, and have consequently lost considerable sums of money.

From Hama I proceeded to El Hamra *chiftlik*. The cultivated portion of the Syrian plains is but dull country to ride across in January. The vast rolling open spaces, marked at intervals by uninteresting ruins or dotted with still more uninteresting beehive villages, present a vista in which neither the poet nor the painter could find many materials upon which to exercise his art. For the last thirty years the nomad Arabs have been gradually settling down instead of wandering to and fro; each year the furrows have pushed further into the desert, each year more families have abandoned a nomadic life for that of sedentary agriculturists. The ground is fertile, the climate mild, and the devastating power of the Bedawin having broken itself through its own ineptitude, there is no little progress.

At El Hamra I was delayed two days waiting for an escort from Aleppo. El Hamra is not exactly an interesting place. There is a half-built barracks and 20 soldiers; an Arab subaltern of 70 years of age and an Albanian veterinary surgeon are posted here, for El Hamra is a *chiftlik*. The soldiers act as shepherds, ploughmen, masons, stud grooms, or anything which the commanding officer takes a fancy to make them. Fifteen villages have been built here within the last year, bringing the total to about two hundred; all of them are the Sultan's private property and none of them existed ten years ago. However, as I have said, the place is not interesting, and I was very glad when nine *mufrasis* (mounted infantry) and a sergeant appeared from Aleppo with orders to take me wherever I wished to go.

The first day's ride took us in three hours to Kasr-ibn-Wardan, a strange building of Roman brick, cement, and basalt in alternate layers, in a style of architecture which I suppose must have flourished in Syria between 400 and 500 A.D. Every turn and peculiarity of the Saracenic style is anticipated, but none clearly developed. The relieving arch over the lintel, the multitude of windows, the domed recess, the inscribed

doorway are all there; but still the general effect is Byzantine, and not Arabian. In the castle itself we found some people who had been sent to cultivate and were busily destroying the ruins to build dwellings for themselves, for all the new villages are being built on old sites. They clamoured loudly to know where the old water supply had been, but we were unable to give them any precise information.

On the other hand we asked for a guide, and a stumpy little black-bearded fellow came forward in response to our request.

"I am Ahmed of the Anazeh, who knows every chink of this desert! By God, what a desert it is! Praise be to God who made deserts! Every crevice of the Shamiyeh is known to me as the cracks betwixt my fingers. Would you to Tadmor in a week? I carry you there, O travellers! Would you to Aleppo in three days—to Rakka in five? For 'Fatmeh's bosom is as white as snow, as white as two hen's eggs on a silken cloth,' even as the poet says, and here am I to show you the way, and the Lord watches over us all. Let us be gone without stay or delay!"

It is only in the Syrian desert that the traveller could find a man, fifty years of age, dressed in rags, equally prepared to extemporise poetry or travel six days' journey for 1*s.* 6*d.* per diem. Such a one was Ahmed of the Anazeh, a lusty little, bright-eyed wildling full of quips, songs, good advice, and proverbs. Under his guidance we were led beyond the zone of cultivation into the very "belly and womb of the desert," as he himself put it.

"Here, O travellers and soldiers, were it not for me you would die in misery—and may a shameful death overtake the man who speaks fulsome folly! Here I might abandon you to perils—a curse on the head of the traitor! Here will I lead you in safety, knowing how you trust Ahmed of the Anazeh—faithful to the master, faithful to God! Listen while I sing:

"'My mare was maimed by a clumsy clown;
He pierced her frog with a cruel nail.
Yet she skimmed the waste like wind-blown down,
And mocked the speed of the scared gazelle.'"

So after three hours Ahmed landed us into an encampment of the Aghedaat under the leadership of an elderly mollah

named Hajji Diab, who was indeed a strange old body with a pale blue headcloth with a white rag twisted round it to show his learning, an ink-horn in his waist-cloth, a beard on one side of his face and none on the other, a broken nose, a ragged coat, and four wives in four wicker cages in the middle of his tattered tent.

"Glory be to God who brings the travellers to my tent! Here is coffee—here is butter—here is rice—here is a lamb—here is barley. Praise be to God, rest and repose are the travellers' meed."

With many such words the old man began his prayers, interspersing them with orders and objurgations: "God is the highest, and he has no companion—*Miriam, has the butter gone to the Bey's tent?*—O compassionating and compassionate, I testify—*Hassan, put a cushion under the Bey's elbow*—that thou art the Lord of Majesty—*O fool of a fire-tender, see, the foul smoke blows in the Bey's face*—even as the Prophet, upon whom be blessing and peace—*the lamb with a black patch on its rump is the one,*" and so on.

When his prayers were ended, it struck me that my host had something on his mind. At last it came out.

"There is no God but God, and I am a poor man with poor people. I pay my taxes for sheep, my taxes for corn, and last year was a bad harvest; but for our Lord the Sultan, upon whom may blessings fall, no man would grudge what is right and just. I pray for him daily, I labour on the crown lands, but there is something I would change. We are poor people, and in the desert there is always drought and our sheep must have drink—and here cometh a tale of sorrow. O Bey, hereabouts be crown lands, and on the crown lands soldiers of the government. Now, O my lord, scarcely is it to be believed, but these soldiers have a shameful custom. In time of drought they come in a company and guard the wells, and when we poor folk come to water ourselves and our cattle they beat us and make us pay money for the water. Last year we were fined fifty dollars for our thirst. The name of soldier grows shameful, and we can bear no more. *Ghazus* (raiding parties) of the Anazeh are one thing, but this guarding of wells another. We are true to the Sultan, but is this justice? Speak, O Bey; is this as it should be?"

A promise to report the matter to the Consul at Aleppo rejoiced the old man's heart, and I subsequently learned from Mr. Longworth that the Vali took up the matter with a strong hand and redressed the evil.

From the tents of the Aghedaat we pushed on into the Shamiyeh, where distance and solitude reign supreme. Although the land is bisected by Roman roads and dotted with ruins, it is hard to believe it was ever inhabited ; yet inhabited it was by someone, as the remains amply testify. These Roman roads certainly clear up one difficulty in history, and that is the extraordinary precision and rapidity of the movements of the early Moslem conquerors. The trade routes of the dying civilisation must have enabled the armies of the first Caliphs to proceed with certainty and accuracy across what is now a desolate waste without landmarks or water.

After many hours we reached a camp of the Beni Hayb. " Arabs, poor Arabs, miserable fellahin, are we ! " was their cry ; and very little else could we get out of them.

The next day a flat stretch of desert, distance, and waste. Six hours, seven hours, eight hours—" O Ahmed of the Anazeh where are we ? "

" Eh, by God, the Euphrates is near ! "

Nine hours—" O Ahmed, you are a liar ! "

" Please God, you will soon see the river haze ! "

Ten hours—" O Ahmed, where is the river ? "

" Look with your glasses, O Bey, can you see nothing ? "

Eleven hours—" Ahmed, you faithless," etc., etc.

" Eh, by God, look, look ! A house of hair—a camel—I will run and see whose it is," and we had reached a camp. Ahmed was seven miles out in his reckoning, which on a line 165 miles long is not so bad after all.

To Rakka we journeyed along the old caravan track by the Euphrates, which has become a carriage road. The day was not enlivened by any particular incident save that a fellahin Arab announced that one of the escort had stolen his *abba*; but as I chanced to have been watching him through my glasses for some time, I was able to prove an alibi for the accused. The night was spent at a nameless camp by the Euphrates, and the next day we reached Rakka, where one of Messrs. Ruston and

Proctor's petrol engines ground corn, and five phonographs made the Moslem New Year's day hideous. The Bedawin highly approve of the motor, but its master complains of its insatiable thirst for expensive liquid.

Here I was visited by a bard—fourteen years old, the son of eighteen bards in the direct line. He extemporises verses in honour of anyone who gives him a *metallic* (½d.), and for two francs promised me undying fame in the Jazirah. He recited couplets which he had composed for Ibrahim, El Hadhi, Abdul Kerim, Mustafa, and Shaykh-el-Obaid.

The Circassians at Rakka seem to be thriving. So far none has died or fallen sick, and I noted with surprise that they had already begun to intermarry with the Kurds and Arabs. In the bazaar I met my friend Shaykh Khalaf of Tell-es-Semen, who had plenty to tell me, inasmuch as he and a thousand Afadli are to be evicted from Tell-es-Semen, where they have been settled these fourteen years, in order to make room for Circassians. The reason is as follows. Fifteen years ago a former Kaimakam of Rakka bought Tell-es-Semen from the government, but never did anything to cultivate, and a year later he was transferred and no more was heard of him. Shaykh Khalaf then settled at the place, and began to cultivate and irrigate. A year ago the Circassians arrived, and the absentee landlord returned and proceeded to sell Tell-es-Semen to the Imperial Domains department as a settling ground. There are now about 1,000 Afadli men working on the disputed lands, and if the government turns them off I prophesy no little trouble, since even the Anazeh and Shammar will make common cause with the Afadli. The whole thing seems very absurd, considering that the banks of the Belikh would easily bear a million people without difficulty.

From Rakka I rode to Tell-es-Semen, where I was well received by the Afadli with coffee and honour. About 9 p.m. however, a drum began to beat and a pipe to play; and at 10 p.m., sleep having become impossible owing to the seven hundred odd camp dogs howling on account of the music, I sent and asked if it could be stopped. The answer came back that this was impossible, since a man had been wounded in the foot two days before. As this reply seemed inconsequent, I sent a

second protest, but received the same answer, and at midnight the drumming was more devilish and the dogs were howling louder than ever. This went on until four o'clock in the morning, when we got a little sleep. At daybreak the following explanation was made: "A son of Adam and a servant of the Prophet was shot in the foot by an enemy while tending sheep. It is bad for a wounded man to sleep at night, therefore the women sing, the drummers drum and the pipers pipe in his tent to keep him awake."

From Tell-es-Semen we journeyed to Ain Isa, where there are perhaps twenty houses of mud. There is a pretty legend about the fountain. A certain holy woman, married to a holy man, bore a child in the waterless desert, and vowed to call the child Isa if it should live. And behold a fountain gushed up, and the child grew to be a great Shaykh, and the fish in the fountain are still sacred to him.

From Ain Isa we proceeded to Tell Sahalan, where there were news and desert gossip in plenty. The Shaykh of the village described Ibrahim's power as growing rather than declining; last year he marshalled no fewer than 18,000 men to drive away the Anazeh, and subsequently destroyed forty villages near Diarbekir in order to provoke the notables of that place. He has constructed at least 400 villages round about Viranshehr, and has now reduced nearly all his enemies to submission. The summons to Aleppo was treated with the greatest ridicule. Ibrahim pretended to be ill and convinced the Pasha who visited him that he was unable to move, but he subsequently proceeded to Jebel Abdul Aziz.

From Tell Sahalan we went westwards to Dubshieh, where we met an ancient Mufti, very learned and extremely proud of himself.

From Dubshieh we proceeded to the tents of the Ghess, the tribe of Mahmud Bey. Ibrahim appears to have robbed and plundered the Moslems last year more than ever, the Berazieh being half ruined, and the Ghess almost entirely. Even the women's clothes and tents were carried off, and the whole of the sheep. The people described how more than 500 lambs bleated for two days and then died because the ewes had been carried off The sheep are sold to the Armenian merchants and villagers

as fast as they are captured, these Armenians who receive the stolen goods being protected by Ibrahim owing to the good offices of Miss Shattuck, the Armenian missionary at Urfa.

At Dubshieh we turned southwards to Kherbet-el-Hedl through a stony region unfit for cultivation, passing the night at a dull camp of shepherds who were Arab servants of Berazieh Kurds.[1]

Next day we came within sight of Ja'abar, and halted at a Berazieh encampment, where a silent and solemn Agha in a grey cut-away coat dispensed coffee. An Anazeh visitor announced that everything in the camp was ours; but, as nothing in the camp belonged to him, this profuse hospitality had but little tincture of sacrifice.

On the way to Ja'abar we passed a strange building, enclosing a tomb, which has been repaired by the present Sultan. There we found a servant who said that Mr. Smith[2] was the last visitor, and that before him there had been no one.

"May we eat in the shadow of the tomb?"

"Nay, and are you not believers in God, people of the Book, who live in hope of salvation? Assuredly, take your rest and pleasure."

So we lunched and then went to the tomb, which is said to be that of Sulaiman Shah, for there were no Sultans in those days—"He was drowned, O travellers, in the river; and whose are the other two tombs we know not, but some say his sons', and others his servants'." The tomb is enclosed in a white-washed barn; on the left-hand side of the grave is a niche in which the local Arabs keep a kerosene oil-tin full of salt to eat for luck, and in the niche they throw their *teskeres* and tax

[1] The Berazieh are a confederation of the following tribes:—

| | Families. | | Families. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Keytkan | 700 | Zerwan | 500 |
| Shaykhan | 600 | Pijan | 800 |
| Okian | 700 | Karagetchan | 500 |
| Shedadan | 700 | Dinan | 1000 |
| Ma'afan | 700 | Mir | 1000 |
| Alidinli | 700 | Didan | 300 |

This gives roughly 32,000 souls, which is about correct for the 360 villages of Seruj.

[2] See *Dar-ul-Islam*.

receipts and other papers, for the tomb is holy and safe from robbers.

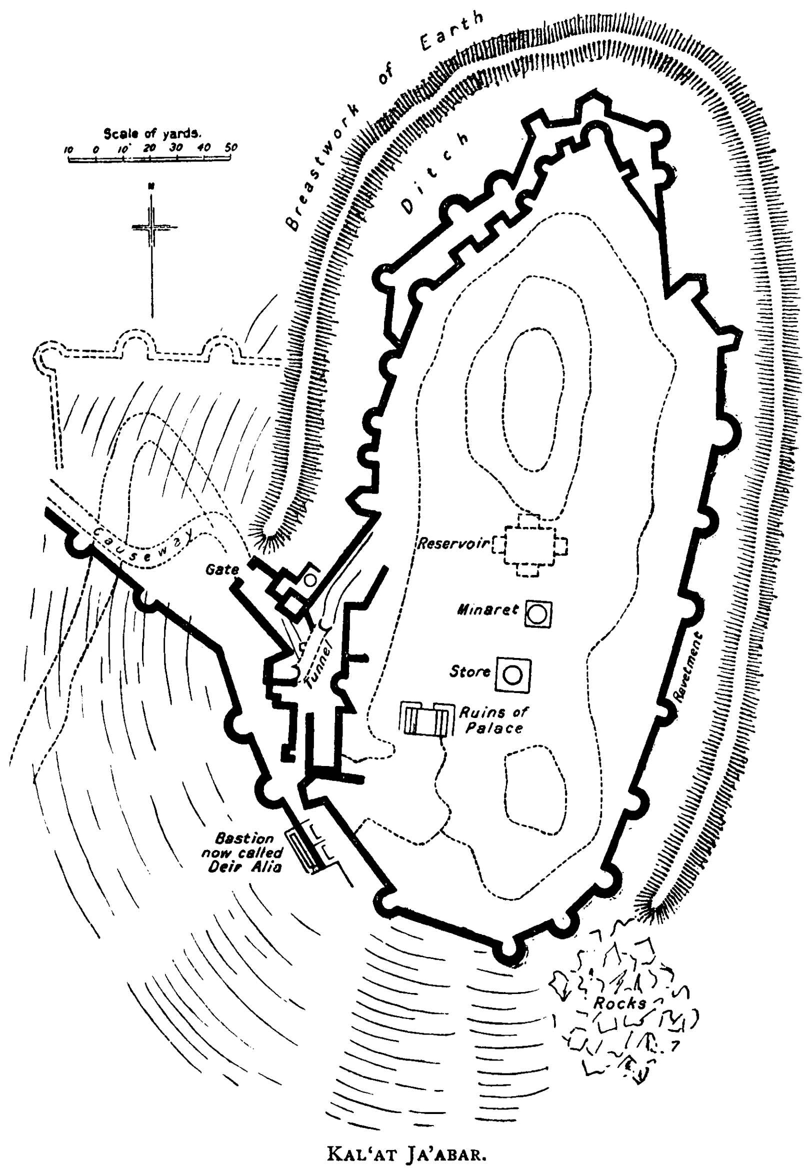
The wonderful ruin of Kal'at Ja'abar ("formidable castle") stands out against the sky on a solitary *tell.* Its red walls are perched upon the overhanging mushroom cliffs of the hill, and in the centre rises a noble minaret, a landmark for miles around, which was doubtless built for purposes of observation as well as for calling the faithful to prayer. The accompanying plan, which I made on the spot and which I think is fairly accurate, will give a better idea of the size and form of the castle than pages of description.

The fortress, which probably dates from the ninth century, must have been very difficult of approach. Huge bastions overhang and compass the entrance on every side; the path is broad but tortuous, and after passing through a perfect labyrinth of gates enters a broad deep tunnel which emerges well within the enceinte of the castle walls. Within there is little beyond the remnants of the keep, but of that little enough to show that the beauties of what is called Saracenic architecture were unknown until long after the Saracenic Empire had died and been forgotten. The architecture of early times was solid, simple, and severe, what beauties there were being reserved for "faïence" work and occasional inscriptions. For the rest, a rare glimpse of herring-bone brick, some trifling device, a strong pointed arch, or a pillar with a little notched pattern, are all that meet the eye.

From Ja'abar we made an excursion to the camp of the Weldi, where we were entertained by the Shaykh, an old gossip, and his son, a dull loon.

"Eh, the world's all out of joint, and creation's ruined by the Anazeh. Drat their offspring, and plague take them. Six years ago they landed here and now they lord it—they came like beggars and stay like princes. They make us Weldi go on *ghazus*, and we are fellah folk, what do we know of *ghazus*? They took us out last year to fight the Shammar—the Shammar roared at us—we hid in *wadis*—our hands shook so with fear that we could not fight—and we lost ten mares and fifteen Martinis, and two of our men were wounded. What do we know of *ghazus*? But these Anazeh cannot rest. Heaven

save us, this year they will force us out again. Wakh! Wakh! By your lordship's noble beard" (three days' growth!) "we shall




KAL'AT JA'ABAR.

be ruined—and pray, may one, a humble person, ask with discretion when the English will take the Jazirah?"

Next day I went back to Ja'abar to complete the survey. With the aid of ropes I was hauled into the minaret, and was thus enabled to climb up to the summit, whence there was a magnificent view, marred only by the fact that the minaret appeared to sway in the wind—the idea seems ridiculous when one is at the bottom, but quite reasonable when one is at the top. The minaret, which has a decided list, is in perfect preservation, save that passing Arabs often pull out a brick of the foundations for luck.

After lunching in the tunnel, I was taken by a score of Arabs to the bastion named Deir Alia (see plan), the great joke being my obvious discomfort when standing in hobnailed boots on a ledge one foot broad, with a sheer drop of two hundred feet on my right, an overhanging precipice of crumbling limestone on my left. When at length I found myself in the bastion, I could think of nothing but the horrible return journey and completely forgot to take any photographs. My servant Jacob thought he saw a better way back and marched out through a loop-hole, with the overcoat and camera in his hands. The Arabs had just haled me back over the ledges, when suddenly I heard yells of distress from the space below, and beheld Jacob standing alone on about six inches of limestone. I thought that the end was very near, but the Arabs seemed only intensely amused; they mimicked his cries and danced with delight and excitement at his predicament, for apparently he could neither go forward nor back without being dashed to pieces. However, after enjoying the fun for some time, the Arabs decided to release him and ran out like so many cats to his rescue.

I rode twice round the castle to complete the survey and then went home to the Weldi. A full moon and a frosty sky make a fair enough picture at sunset in a Weldi camp in February. The Anazeh camels roar and growl their spring love-songs; the hundreds of baa-ing lambs scurry into camp; the white limestone hills are patched with green; the greater stars glister in the sky; the west is blood-red, but a thin strip of mackerel cloud bars the east; the lights shine in the low black tents, and the sweet camel-thorn smoke blows gently and low through the

cold air; far away the river runs between its bushy banks, broad, deep and still; Abu Kherereh's towers stand out like two sentinels of the Shamiyeh, while Kal'at Ja'abar itself seems to arise from its ruins completely restored by the uncertain light.

Next day we pushed on to the Anazeh, on the way visiting the Neshab tower, which was perhaps once an observatory, since it is pierced with about fifteen tube-like shafts leading to a domed recess in the foundations. The Anazeh we found polite, attentive, and intelligent. They are under the leadership of Hashim Bey, who is passing rich on £4,392 per annum, made up as follows:—

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Duty on his tribe's sheep | 1,300 |
| Duty on sale of corn | 500 |
| Blackmail on merchants | 1,600 |
| Pastoral rights paid by Berazieh and others | 300 |
| Gifts from merchants | 500 |
| Pay from Turkish government | 192 |

The first thing he said was, "When will the English take the Jazirah? Hashim Bey prays them not to delay." Hashim Bey is a handsome if somewhat sinister young fellow of some thirty years of age. His cousin talks French and makes bad charcoal drawings; he has been to school but returned, sick of town life. While I was with the Anazeh, Hashim sent 500 men to rob the Roala in the Shamiyeh, the party being mounted on dromedaries with mares led behind, and three weeks' provisions in the saddle-bags.

When we left in the morning, Hashim said good-bye, but asked for nothing, so I afterwards sent him a pair of field-glasses; he is not only a Bedawi but a gentleman. Just as I was leaving, entered, closely veiled, Hashim's grandmamma, suffering from asthma, so I gave her some peppermint pills. Poor old lady—she told me that when the tribe moves she suffers dreadfully in the *howdah*.

About 9 o'clock there burst into my tent a friend of mine, namely, "Khalaf, the thief," who had ridden from Rakka to join my party.

Khalaf acted as guide on the following day and took us to

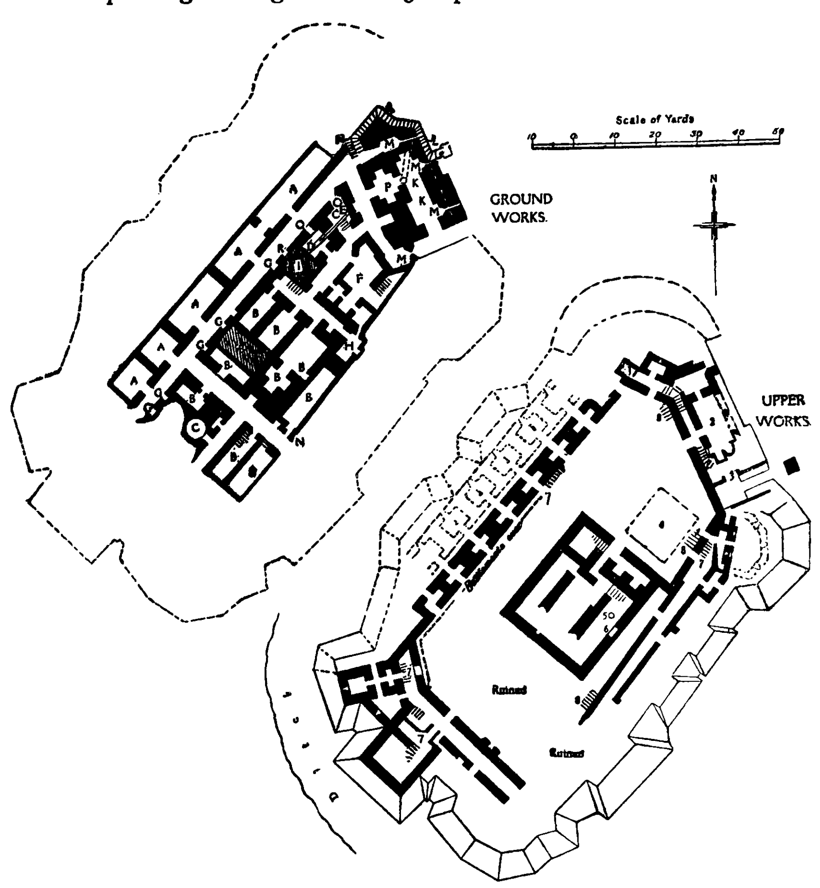
Jernieh, where we camped in the waste, and the next day on to Masudiyeh. Masudiyeh is really Khashkash, a mud flat inhabited by Showeyeh or Weldi Arabs. Ahmed the Anazeh loathes them. "Dogs!" he snapped, as we came near their tents; "without honour or shame!" Ahmed has a peculiar Bedawi way of warming himself, which is accomplished by leaping over a blazing fire in his shirt.

To everyone's consternation snow began to fall heavily at 8 p.m., and continued till sunrise, when it was bitterly cold. We rode off to Tell-ed-Dba'u ("hyaenas' hill"), a conical hill with a huge tesselated mosaic pavement on the top. Alas! a damned Aleppan effendi has built a house on it and so spoiled nearly every chance of laying it bare. As it was too cold to camp, we broke into the effendi's house, drove out the servants, and occupied the place. On the way to Tell-el-Hamr we passed Serrin and its two towers. We found great difficulty in getting a guide, since a foot of snow chills even an Arab's appetite for *metallics*; but at last, by adopting a stratagem, we persuaded a Kadri dervish to show us the way. We hinted to him that my escort, which daily increases (confound Fraser!), would be billeted in his village, and also pretended that I did not pay for their rations. The mere thought of this enforced extension of his hospitality suddenly filled the holy man with accurate geographical information, and he sallied forth more than willing to act as guide.

At Tell-el-Hamr we crossed the Euphrates by a ferry—large boats and quite safe—and reached Kal'at-el-Nijm, the finest castle I have yet seen. I started mapping it at 8 o'clock in the morning and only finished at 7.30 in the evening.

Kal'at-el-Nijm, built in the twelfth century, is the most agreeable surprise, being perhaps the only perfect Saracenic castle in existence. The outer works have suffered a little, but within the castle is well-nigh what it was when it was built. The great gate, flanked by enormous bastions, is very impressive, and opens upon a dark passage, which turns abruptly right and left, leading to a guard-house. In the lower part or ground-works of the castle are enormous stores and barrack rooms, wells, a vast kitchen and oven, water conduits, and ammunition hoists leading up to the battlements. The stores or granaries are mostly about twelve feet by twenty-

seven feet in length, and in one corner of the lower works is a mosque large enough to hold 300 persons.




KAL'AT-EL-NIJM.

*A* Barrack rooms. *B* Stores. *C* Cisterns. *D* Kitchen and furnace. *E* Arrangement for supplying kitchen with water. *F* Mosque. *G* Cupboards or stands for arms. *H* Room for hoisting stores to upper works. *K* Main Guard and Keep. *L* Subterranean passage leading to a rock-cut chamber 64 ft. below surface. *M* Emplacements for balistæ, &c. *N* Stairs leading to upper works. *P* Guard room. *Q* Stoke-hole to furnace. *R* Door choked up, probably leading to a room.

1. W.C. 2. Mosque, Mihrab, Balcony and Library. 3. Gate (*see* plan of ground-works). 4. Lower Mosque or Bath (*see* plan of ground-works). 5. Well (*see* plan of ground-works). 6. Hoist or lift shaft. 7. Steps up to battlements. 8. Steps leading below.

The main gallery forms a lane of six large barrack rooms where I suppose the garrison lived. Near the main gate I found a strange winding staircase leading downwards; this staircase, after turning abruptly right and left, formed two shafts leading into the living rock, where both shafts terminated abruptly in small chambers about fifteen feet square. It is difficult to imagine what these costly works were intended for, since they lead nowhere and the spaces at the end are not large enough for any imaginable purpose. Several flights of stairs lead up to the battlements, which within are in excellent preservation. Above the gate are evidently the quarters of the chieftain to whom the castle belonged, including a mosque, a library, and a balcony whence there is a magnificent view of the Euphrates. In the centre stands the citadel, and it was somewhat affecting to notice that the stairs of this final refuge had been purposely blocked with stones, probably during the last defence after the outer works had been carried.

The whole impression one receives is one of solemn and rugged grandeur. It is not difficult to people the place with its ancient garrison of Turks, Arabs, and perhaps renegade Franks; to imagine the pulley and windlass creaking under the weight of arrows and stones for the engines; to see the hosts of troops drawing their rations at the gate of the kitchen; or to fancy the fierce chieftain pacing to and fro upon the balcony, pondering on what new country he shall ravage, or what town he shall blackmail for ransom.

The soldiers of my escort who helped me to explore the castle vied with one another in gloomy philosophy. "Where are they who built this? Gone to their account! God have mercy on us all! What does it profit a man to be rich and wealthy? Death is his master. The fellow who built this said 'I am strong and powerful!' Who knows even his grave or his name? Bats and owls are beholden to this forgotten one —aye, for their pleasure did he squander his gold."

After a short spell of intellectual dalliance of this kind, we set to work to plan the castle in real earnest. The hundred and thirty-two chambers were explored, and bastions clambered over, and by two o'clock the upper works were mapped. Then began the more arduous task of planning the lower regions. After

the stores, wells, barrack rooms, kitchens, mosques and treasury were "logged" in rapid succession, we embarked on the underground passage. Down the steep steps, through centuries of dust, into the bowels of the earth did we descend. A huge stone lay tottering on the staircase, and as a careless movement would have sufficed to send this ton of rock crashing on our backs, an Arab was posted to sit on it and prevent it slipping while we went below. The passage is not above three feet wide nor more than six feet high. My exploration was assisted by four soldiers, the trumpeter, Jacob, and eight villagers, everyone talking at once, everyone stamping in the dust, everyone pushing the man in front of him. At last we reached the end, realising the fact because the leading man cursed and swore and shinned the man behind him, and no amount of pushing would advance the procession an inch further. All the way back I thought of the fire-damp which accumulates in such passages, and the Arab who had been posted on the rock had gone—which added to one's pleasure, because it took ten minutes to reach that quivering stone. At length we emerged into pure air, black and grey with dust, stifled, choking and exhausted.

Next day we went on to Sawda, and so out of the desert to people who dwell in houses and cultivate vines. Before leaving El Nijm we passed the remains of a mosque and tomb, evidently of the same date as the castle. I conceive the tomb to be that of the robber who built the castle, who is now given the name of Shaykh Hassan, and the tomb is a storehouse for absentees' belongings—ploughs, shawls, etc. How strange that the robber's grave should be a refuge from thieves!

Two days more and we reached Aleppo and civilisation.

# CHAPTER VII

## HURIYEH, 1909

*HURIYEH! Huriyeh!* and again *Huriyeh!* Let us repeat it again with a Turkish accent, close our teeth, and staccato our delivery, saying once more "*Hur-i-yeh*"—for in Arabic *Huriyeh* means liberty, and the Turks, being universal plunderers of an etymological kind, have seized upon the word to express that event which occurred in the Ottoman Empire last July. *Huriyeh* is a portmanteau expression of the greatest capacity; it at once describes an era, an historical incident, a mood, and a school of thought; also it has various interpretations besides: among others it means "liberty."

Having, since childhood, had a great affection for those peoples who dwell in the Asiatic provinces of the Sultan, I decided to pay my friends a visit and congratulate them on *Huriyeh.* Accordingly I landed at Jaffa early in March—Jaffa the little flat town with a vile harbour, orange groves, blue sky and a blazing sun; and so proceeded to Jerusalem by the little railway. Here I met an old comrade of mine; a Moslem Arab, with a strong dash of Turkish blood in his veins, stern, severe, laconic, absolutely trustworthy, a rigid observer of the law, honest, conservative, and on certain points absolutely rigid and immovable; he would sooner die than drink wine or break his plighted word; he would sooner lose all his worldly goods than be ruled by a Christian. "Well," said I, "O father of Mahmud, what are these new things?" "*Huriyeh*, my lord," he replied. "But what is this *Huriyeh*?" "That there is no law, and each one can do as he likes." As he spoke the father of Mahmud frowned, and a strange hard glitter came into his

eyes. I at once perceived that to pursue the subject would show both a want of tact and taste. A Moslem, though he may have risked his life in your service, can show you very plainly that there are certain matters which he prefers not to discuss with you. As far as South Syria is concerned, the judgment of the father of Mahmud seemed not to be very far wrong. The overwhelming government had vanished, and nothing had taken its place. The people carried openly the revolvers they used to secrete about their persons; murderers and thieves were not punished, yet on the other hand there was not a great increase in the number of the thieving and murderous fraternity; taxes were neither paid nor asked for, public demonstrations had become a national amusement, the police were cheerfully impotent, and all except the government officials were patiently waiting for something to turn up.

The governor of Jerusalem sat in his office and deplored the fact that six policemen were not sufficient to keep order among the 150,000 inhabitants for whose peace he was responsible. "Doubtless," said he, "Parliament will make provision." The gendarmes were subdued and suppressed in the presence of the public, while the troops seemed eager to learn their drill under the supervision of such junior officers as could drag themselves away from the political charms of the military club. Young officers were learning to say "J'adore le jambon. Je bois le koniak. Je ne suis pas fanatique. Les paysans sont ignorants. Nous avons la liberté. Nous avons le progrès." The Christians were beginning to quarrel among themselves; the Jews were beginning to peer and peep and talk of Zionism; the Ulema were reserved; and the father of Mahmud looked upon the new world with that same steely glitter in his eye.

This was urban *Huriyeh*. Rustic *Huriyeh* was different. The tillers of the land accepted matters as they came; fifty miles south of Jerusalem and twenty west of the Dead Sea the village elders of K'seyfeh gave me their views of *Huriyeh*. We sat at eventide by a smoking fire of camel dung, I and three patriarchs with brown skins, brown eyes, snowy beards and ragged garments. Said I, "Well, what of *Huriyeh?*" The old men croaked and chuckled, "What of *Huriyeh?* By God! men talk of *Huriyeh*, but we have not seen it!" "But is not the

world different?" 'The world," snapped one of the old men, "the world was ruined in time past. It is not built again because people in towns say *Huriyeh!* Man lives, dies, and so to an end whether *Huriyeh* or no *Huriyeh!*" "But are not things better for village folk?" "Sun and rain pay no heed to *Huriyeh*, but truly perhaps things are better; we paid no taxes this year; perhaps the book is lost, or perhaps *Huriyeh* has taken them away. God is all-knowing. What is before us God knows and no other." A fine, clean-limbed young shepherd broke into the discourse here: "There is no doubt that things are better; I did not hide my revolver when your lordship's escort came into the village!"

These southern Syrians are fine, lean, clean-limbed men, surprisingly fair, civil and independent; they eagerly salute one on the road, and not a few shake hands out of pure good nature. It is pleasant to be in camp again. Why should a red nose, burning, sun-scorched ears, a draughty tent, a flickering candle, three barking dogs, stiff limbs, camel smoke, muttering servants, a clear sky, two squealing stallions, and infinite space above, around, far and near, rocks, dust and cold be pleasant? Yet indeed it is so. There is an apsidal church at K'seyfeh—in ruins of course; only three or four columns are standing.

Six hours through lands slightly cultivated took us from K'seyfeh to Kurnub, a ruined city overlooking a gorge with a river and a dam.

To leave Kurnub in a southerly direction is to enter the true, fearful, terrible, and frightful desert, the desert of huge mountains of blinding red and white stone, the desert of thick, impenetrable atmosphere, of deathly trees, withered, shrivelled, blasted and stunted, of jagged rocks, mushroom-topped mounds, vast, burning, arid watercourses, of scanty, acrid wells and unending ranges of uncharted hills. Men lived here once, but they are dead; dead as the withered grass, dead as the blazing pebbles, dead as the grim red rocks, dead as the scoured, empty channels scooped in those dead hills and highlands. For two days we saw no human soul save one old withered crone and twenty black satanic goats; for two days we rode under a leaden, cloudless sky in which is framed a sun of brass, through mocking forests of dry, leafless trees; for two days we passed

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# Route to Petra from TEYAHA

(Note: None of these watercourses contain perennial streams)

35°
El Ghara
TEYAHA
Kurnub
31°
Ancient rock hewn road
Ain el Harrar
Ain Weibeh
Ain el Ghamr
Ruined Khan
Robbers Outpost
Mt Hor
Tombs
Ruin
Ain Musa (Village)
PETRA
Damascene Ma'an
Egyptian Ma'an
MA'AN
Station
31°

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 MILES

35°

London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd.

Stanford's Geog. Estab. London.

over these grim unending ridges, along these pebbly river beds, through these baking, burning gullies. In all its aspects this hellish land speaks of death—in the shivering heats it speaks of death by thirst; its torrential rains spell wild floods and disasters; its rank swamps, fever and pestilence; its blank barrenness, starvation.

In this wise we reached Ain-el-Ghamr—a fœtid spring in a broad, pebbly water-course, maybe two miles in breadth. With the dawn we turned south-east, and emerged from the river-bed on to a shingly, baking plain, some nine miles across, where before us rose the forbidding heights of the mountains of Moab, piled up in Alpine proportions, yet bare, waterless and pitiless as the empty plain. Three hours over the level brought us to a rift in a black volcanic ridge, the outpost and gate of this dismal region.

Hardly had we entered this frowning gate when our guide became uneasy, and pointed and twittered in true Bedawi fashion; the escort clattered up and glared at the rocks, even as I glared, but saw nothing; the Bedawi guide still pointed and twittered—a black rock moved and fluttered into life, and behold, four ghoul-like men, baked black with heat, pinched lean with hunger, ragged, fierce and inquisitive, strode out on to the path and squatted on the ground in sign of submission. They were mere ordinary footpads who did not aspire to such high game as we—men from Egypt, scowling, low-bred rascals. Well might one take them as the guardian genii of this frightful region—lean, bony, with muscles stretched like wires, grizzly beards, cruel eyes, hooked noses, long yellow teeth, tattered linen tunics, yellow with filth and age, black cloths bound to their heads by black ropes, and pitiless, predatory, revengeful, fierce, greedy faces. Their very souls seemed burned and dried within them. After a few hollow words, they slunk away, vanishing into some watercourse as noiselessly as they had come. They were only four in number to our ten; yet somehow they sent a thrill of apprehension down my spine.

We pushed on into the mountains, up, up, and yet further up—up *wadis*, up dry, torrential beds, over blinding white ridges, across dark, shingly flats, yet ever upwards, now and again losing our scanty trail, yet always on and up. The foul scene

below broadened and expanded in its weary desolation, the air cleared—as the Bedawi said, "Heaven has been sick these three days,"—and we could now see the full horror of the desert unveiled. Eastward to Hejaz, westward to the Mediterranean, southward to Port Said, northward to Jerusalem—one vast eternal wilderness, wolds, plains, river beds, mountains, valleys and depressions, spread out beneath our gaze, mile upon mile, league upon league of flat, blue ridge, of misty distance, of winding watercourses. In this variety one undeviating, invariable fact appears: the outline is the outline of a habitable country. At the first glance these mountains might be rich with fields, vineyards, and pasture; those plains, fair stretches of country-side; those hazy seams, swiftly flowing rivers. But no; it is all one great stretch of dead, forgotten desolation: not one column of smoke, not one patch of black tent, not one rippling brook, not one living, moving thing, not even a mirage. It is, as it were, a shadow of life, all silent, eternal, death; some day when the world dies its corpse will be like this.

Yet on and up must we climb, up and on, stumbling, blundering, sweating and climbing on this blinding, parched mountain-side, until we reach the very summit, and we stand facing another peak separated by a slight coll. On this other stands a mud mosque and dome of Nebi Harun. Then we begin the downward scramble into Petra. The whole scene assumes a darker hue; the rocks turn red and black in tiger-like stripes, and are seamed and grained in every tint from blood-red through dull purple to ashen grey and thence to inky black. By the action of wind and rain the soft sandstone of these jagged gorges is scoured out into a million fantastic shapes; now they look like heaps of bloody skulls blackened by fire, yet still grinning maliciously; now like foul, crawling reptiles of vast size; now like the clutching hands of buried skeletons forcing their way through the earth; now like the chaotic ruins of some cyclopean buildings. Through these overwhelming gorges we make the descent to the burning, stifling depths of Petra.

The first signs of the city are some courses of stone and some hollowed caves. As one approaches the ruined town

these signs increase in number, till the rocks and mountain-sides are honeycombed with caves and the whole of the valleys are blocked with roughly-hewn stones, scattered here and there, tumbled in heaps, hurled in all directions, by earthquake and torrent. At last we reach the bottom of the valley, where the centre of the forgotten city lay—a valley so encircled and straitened by mountains and frowning sandstone cliffs, that day is shorter by an hour at dawn and sunset than elsewhere.

What of Petra itself? The city is but a heap of tumbled stones. In one corner three walls of one temple still stand; but for the rest confusion, chaos, and ruin so hopeless that the most vivid imagination cannot reconstruct a street, a house, or building. Around this mass of wreckage stand the channelled, tumultuous hills, honeycombed with rock-cut tombs, the dwellings of the ever dead surviving and overlooking the utter destruction of the homes of the once living. So much for the *coup d'œil* of Petra.

What of her art? Three monuments still survive, the Bait Māl, the Dair, and the fortress. The scenery of Petra is at once so grandiose, so terrible, and so overwhelming that a man might well ponder before he set his hand to work. Petra's three greatest monuments survive intact, and they came upon me with something of a surprise, something of a shock. First there was the Bait Mal, reached amidst crumbling ruins, through dark and rocky gorges, to the bottom of which the light of day scarcely penetrates, to an open space, a hollow in the earth, through which the high sun's beams shot in great rays of light. I looked up, and what did I see? There, before me, sculptured in high relief from the living rock, some 80 feet high and some 60 feet broad, was nothing more or less than a vast case for a mantelpiece clock of the mid-Victorian period. Was there ever in the history of architecture such Brobdingnagian bathos as this monstrous piece of vulgarity? The design may roughly be described as a portico and pediment supporting a broken pediment divided by a hock bottle, on the apex of which is a debased Ionic capital supporting a pineapple! The grotesque stupidity of the design has lost nothing of its pristine folly through time and age. It is as clear-cut, as senseless,

as undignified as the day when the slaves hacked it out of the rock—so ill-proportioned that its huge dimensions appear insignificant, so florid and debased that it has no suggestion of beauty. Such is the Bait Mal. Save that it is uglier and heavier, the Dair is the same; and save that it is more weather-worn, the fortress is identical. That the rest of Petra is hopelessly ruined may be a loss to archaeology, but certainly not to architecture.

How came these vulgar pretentious monuments to be in this strange place? Why this rather small city and theatre, surrounded by thousands and thousands of rock-cut tombs varying in size and exterior ornament, but inside plain, square chambers and no more, without inscription, carving or tracery? Petra can never have been naturally wealthy, like Amman or Gerash, never a rich town of merchants and blackmailers like Tadmor. Why then these expensive tombs? Why any city at all? I dreamt a dream in Petra; perhaps it is true. I dreamt that Petra was of old a good place to be buried in, as is Kerbela, or the Ganges, or parts of China. This idea was held by the Syrians, and, moreover, the rock was soft and easy to cut, even as it is to-day. At a period of great wealth, somewhere in the first or second century, there came to be living in the town a knot of pagan priests and stonecutters, each with a keen eye to business. The priests discovered that immense blessings accrued to those buried in the rocks—natural blessings, and extra blessings owing to their notable prayers and religious exercises. There came to them also as a high priest a keen man of affairs; and business, which had heretofore been of a steady but somewhat restricted nature, immediately "boomed." Hitherto a few Arabian princes' bodies, a few dead desert notables requiring comfortable rock-cut apartments, had produced a certain annual sum in fees, sacrifices, and perquisites; but now the business-man high priest, like a previous incarnation of some American trust magnate, swooped like a hawk upon the possibilities of the place, and by careful manipulation and a percentage system, every shrine and temple hummed with praises of the excellence of the Petran necropolis.

Thus Petra became "smart"—Petra became "the thing." "Just been looking at the design of my family tomb at Petra,"

would be the common after-dinner phrase of the wealthy merchant of North Syria. "Just sent Uncle Julianus' body to Petra," says young Philippus of Bosra, who has inherited enormous wealth. "My bones shall rest in the sandstone of Petra; let them now enjoy repose on these Syrian silks," says a fashionable epicurean philosopher of Homs while indulging in a carefully prepared extempore disquisition. "See that my body goes to Petra, dear," sighs the governor of the Hauran to his wife, as he opens his veins after reading a somewhat curt message from the Emperor. "Who dares to say that my tomb, which has cost millions, is not finer than that of that cheating hound, Bardanes?" roars an army contractor of Damascus. In Petra, on the other hand, the rocks ring with chisel and adze, and thousands of slaves toil night and day hewing out porticoes, scooping out chambers, and burrowing in the rocks. Older tombs are shaven away, and the inmates' bones scattered to the winds to make room for new ones. The municipality increases in wealth and glory, and a public theatre is built out of the profits. The business-man high priest keeps a careful eye on the ever-increasing receipts, and from a shrine and village Petra becomes a profitable enterprise. The tombs are scheduled in class and price—from a regal, ornate hock-bottle front for six million sesterces, to a plain family vault of the eighth class with a straight-edged portico, dentals and egg-and-dart ornament extra. And so did Petra continue, till people had no money or time to waste on vanity, vulgarity, and folly.

From Petra we proceeded to Ma'an. At one time the men of Ma'an of Egypt and Ma'an of Syria blackmailed the pilgrims; now the railway has taken their place. At Ma'an railway station I saw thirteen ruined locomotives and a heap of other wreckage, human and inanimate. The human wreckage consisted of a gang of drunken Constantinopolitan "wasters," bad Moslems to a man—never have I seen such a loathsome crew of debauched, brutalised scoundrels as the permanent staff of the Hejaz railway.[1] Alas! when the East takes to mechanical arts it grows far fouler than the West. The Hejaz railway has imported into its area a host of new vices and not a single

[1] The whole crowd were massacred about six months later, owing to their ill-treatment of the Bedawin, who could bear them no more.

virtue, and I cannot weep or wonder at the fact that the Bedawin pull up the rails and wreck the trains by instinct.

Twenty miles along the railway, on the way from Ma'an to Anezeh, we came across a mud hut, where a dismal youth from Baghdad sat watching a telegraph tape spinning out untruths about trains which never reach the place. The youth wore English bedroom slippers, a checked sporting waistcoat, and a military overcoat. He sat with his telegraphic instrument before him, and a battered native guitar with one string in his hand. Between occasional taps at the wire he extemporised the most dismal quatrains about lost camping-grounds, and swaying, graceful, heartless maidens.

"God assist you and peace be with you, sir; we are your guests."

"And upon you also be peace and good rest."

"We are guests and ask a favour."

"Speak, and all I have I will grant."

"There is here a pump for the refreshment of engines of the railway; may we give our beasts of this water in the wilderness?"

I do not know what fearful regulations were broken, but we got the water. Night fell, and the local dogs howled and barked until I scattered them with a shot-gun at two a.m. At six o'clock we left, still skirting the railway, and met a train from Damascus, which stopped for a chat, the engine-driver salaaming just as he would have done had he been riding a donkey. There were very few passengers on the train, and what becomes of these trains no one knows. No trains have been north for eight days, but they come south every day, which must end in congestion somewhere!

Further up the line we met six soldiers from all parts of the Empire, very cheerfully engaged in tinkering up the line. The drought continuing, we turned off the railway and followed the Haj road, where we met a lonely dervish, a superb figure about six feet high and broad in proportion.

"Peace be with you!"

"And upon you peace!"

"Whither away?"

"God willing, to Medina."

"And whence?"

"My lord, I am an Englishman; I come from Hyderabad."

"Take this to help you on your road, and may you prosper." The man wept, and we left him praying. His face was emaciated but noble, and pious beyond all words—a good, wholesome contrast to the rogues and drunken villains in the hotel at Ma'an.

The Haj road is terrible and dreary. Little graves mark the places where pilgrims have died upon their way, and innumerable tracks mark the pacings of centuries of weary feet. Pitiless desert, pitiless Haj, how many victims have you claimed these 1,400 years, by dearth, by pestilence, by violence? Along this road came Khalid, the Sword of God, and the first conquerors; along this same road marched the proud Omayyads on their way to the shrines they had desecrated; along this road have toiled annually all the faithfullest souls in Islam.

We unbelievers also went along it, to the castle of El Hass, a *khan* with a well and a keeper; but the keeper was away and the door locked, and the water beyond our reach. It was either three hours' more ride or . . . Well, we decided on violence. I broke the ice by blowing in the lock of the gate with three rounds from my rifle, and the escort followed suit by smashing up every single movable wooden thing in the castle for firewood—namely, a chair, a kerosene oil box, a yoke, a plough, a wooden scope, and a barrel.

Nine hours over a rough road took us to Maghagha, and from there we pushed on to El Kerak, where the *Huriyeh* is in full swing. El Kerak is situated on an inaccessible rock, and until fifteen years ago anybody who went there was robbed or beaten, or both, by its inhabitants. Finally a distinguished English traveller and his wife were made to pay a certain number of sovereigns, so the Turkish government decided to strike a blow for progress, enlightenment, ready cash and civilisation. Soldiers were despatched, and many are the tales of the hideous battle which fell out between the men of El Kerak and the Imperial army. At Jerusalem I was told the following story. A division of troops some five and fifty thousand strong surrounded the city, and battalion after battalion was hurled against its impregnable walls; but Albanians, Turks, Lazes and

Circassians were flung back in dismay, and the army was on the point of defeat. Suddenly an officer sprang before the Hebron regiment. "Men of Hebron," he thundered, "Turk and Albanian have fled, ours is the glorious task. Behold!"—so saying he tore open his coat exposing his bare chest—"until this is riddled, let no Hebron man fail in his duty." A fierce roar of "Hebron and victory" rose from six hundred throats, the officer waved his sword, the Hebron regiment surged forward to the assault, amidst indescribable carnage the city was stormed and taken, the faltering Turks and Albanians rallied, and El Kerak was lost to the Bedawin. In Hebron the story was different—one night a mixed brigade accompanied by a battery of light mountain guns camped outside the city, the Bedawin retired, and the troops occupied the place next day.

Anyhow El Kerak now boasts a Latin church, a Greek church, a medical station (British), a mosque, a school, a Mutesarrif, a *dowlah* and all the rest; it has also a member of parliament, but the main thing there now is *Huriyeh.* The Christians are scratching their heads and wondering what is going to happen; the local Moslems are mildly interested; the soldiers are waxing fat on a regular issue of one dollar a month; the local Ulema—Anatolian Turks, pink, rubicund and spotless—are explaining that parliamentary government is essentially a Koranic institution; the native mission teachers are restless, irritable, pessimistic, and insolent, and the local Bedawin tentative. How will these strange elements fuse and develop? [1]

From El Kerak we journeyed to Wadi Murjeb, a wondrous crack in the earth a thousand feet down and the same up again. It was winter on either side, spring half-way down the slope, and summer at the bottom, though not three miles separate the opposite edges of the cliffs. Further on, on the way to El M'leyha, we passed a ragged man.

"Peace be with you!"

"And with you peace!"

"From which nation of the men of the desert?"

"From those whose tents are below."

[1] Six months later the Bedawin broke in and killed every Moslem in the place, sparing Christians; they knew that if they killed Christians Europe would intervene. This was written before the outbreak occurred.

"And whose are they?"

"Arabs."

"Yet which Arabs?"

"Shararat"—the point of the dialogue being that the Shararat are notable thieves, and their men do not like it to be known whence they come.

At M'leyha we saw some Greek Christians in tents, armed to the teeth and glad of the *Huriyeh*, for they say they can now raid as well as other men.

We rode on to Ziza, where we found a Turkish station-master in tweeds, who spoke neither Arabic nor French; fifteen trucks containing eighty Persians, seventy Moors, and a hundred odds and ends from Java, Cape Town, India, Egypt, Manchuria; a cistern built by Khosrou, a Byzantine church, a German wind-mill for pumping, and a *ghazu* of 500 Arabs of the Beni Sakhr just returned from a bootless expedition against the Druzes. What a combination! A man might write till doomsday trying to describe what it all means. The black *kalpak*, the snow-white *burnous*, the desert men, the tweed suit of the young Turk, a blazing sun overhead, the dust, the richly-tilled earth, the narrow band of railway, the blue hazy hills, the flocks, the ruins—each is a symbol pent up with meaning—why, everything east of Smyrna that matters was gathered for one brief moment in Ziza station.

When the Turkish driver had whistled long enough, the station-master waved his flag, the train started, six more pilgrims were pulled into the train, and the Bedawi and I gave a sort of view halloo and chased the train a mile or so amidst cheers from the passengers. A little later a Shaykh of the Beni Sakhr came up—a tedious young man, very non-committal about the *Huriyeh* but very regretful of Izzet, the second secretary. There is something suspicious about these border tribes; someone has been at work, I feel convinced, and that someone knows his business.

The next day we reached Mashîta, the palace of Khosrou. The whole of this magnificent façade, the only one of its kind in existence, has been levelled to the ground and destroyed or carried away, it is said by two German savants. If this be the case, it is the grossest act of vandalism since Omar's time—is it

credible that that which the Arabs, Greeks and Bedawin have spared should have been wrecked by Europeans? Never have I seen such a dismal spectacle, never have I heard a Bedawi express regret at the destruction of a wonderful object; yet at Mashîta, I saw that which I trust I may never see again, there I heard a Bedawi say "Wallah haram"—"By God, it is a shame"—and by God, he spoke the truth. Every vestige of the façade, which was some 20 feet high and 100 feet long and was covered with delicate tracery—fruit, flowers, birds, men, and beasts—has been wrenched off and carried away, and the interior of the building has also suffered. So in the year of grace 1905 perished the most wonderful monument in Syria.

Through cultivated lands, we rode to Kal'at Zerka, a flourishing Chachan village, and thence to Kherbet-es-Samra, where, as there was no water and only two insolent Stambulis, we pushed on to Mafarag or Fdeyn. On the way there was an unexpected incident. We were riding along the railway, which is supposed to dispel all romance, and after passing a labouring goods-train crawling up a slope, we came down into a valley filled with wildfowl—birds good to eat, but of what name I know not. I naturally dismounted and had a few shots, bagging perhaps four birds. Suddenly I heard the soldiers of my escort shout out, "Get up; let's be off!" And well had we need, for on every skyline were advancing men, interspersed with galloping horsemen, who had suddenly sprung from nowhere. "These pimping Bedawin take us for Beni Sakhr," yelled the *zaptieh.* Hardly had he spoken when bullets began whizzing past us from every quarter—kicking in the dust, whistling by our ears, ricocheting and humming through the air in the liveliest manner—followed by the thudding of Martinis, the snapping of Mausers, Gras rifles, and all the heterogeneous but unpleasantly accurate armoury which is now the commonplace of the desert. For about five minutes we were in the hottest corner I have been in in my life; the shooting was extraordinarily accurate, most of the shots being within a radius of twelve yards, and every one was fired at more than a thousand yards' range.

Vainly I waved my helmet; the tribesmen only shot the faster, and seemingly the straighter. The spot where we stood was absolutely wanting in any crevice into which we could creep,

and, as the Arabs were now in a complete ring around us, affairs looked rather black. Luckily, the horsemen, whose shooting was less to be feared than that of the people on foot, now began to close in; so the rear line ceased their firing for fear of hitting their own people. The horsemen yelled and "lillilu-ed" in proper style, shooting as they came. The distant toot of the ridiculous train fell on my ear, and there flashed across my mind the picture of a party of Cook's tourists going to Petra: "Oh, my dear Maria, how interesting! Look at those Arabs playing in the desert, 'children of Noah'—what are Mr. Blunt's verses?—Selim, get the guide-book." Was I to end my days as a desert side-show?

The bullets buzzed and the horsemen whooped as viciously as ever. At last our enemies got within shrieking distance: and we yelled "Friends! Friends! By the one God, friends!" till one wiry fellow on a fleabitten mare got close up to us, thrust his Martini in my face, looked hard and then burst into peals of laughter. He waved to his companions, and then began to talk.

"Ay, by God, by my life, a Consul; and we thought you Beni Sakhr."

"Whizz!" came a tardy bullet.

"Nay, a friend—a friend!"

"Bu-z-z!" went another bullet.

"A friend— a friend, numskull!"

"Ping!" another bullet, and praise the Lord, the last. By this time our would-be captors were all around us laughing, chattering, and shouting the news. The sergeant of my police began a sententious speech, but no one listened. Jacob explained the mistake. Everyone was appeased, except an elderly gentleman with a tent pole. He was short-sighted and could not believe that Beni Sakhr did not wear pith helmets, and continued to menace and rave until led away by two stout youngsters. The rest of the army, now perhaps two hundred strong, began to vanish whence they had come. Three horsemen, however, we obliged to accompany us to the nearest station. They were profuse in apologies, and said they hoped that I should not make any complaint to the authorities, which I promised not to do. At the station we found a desponding station-master and no water. Luckily the station-master had fever, so I dispensed

quinine as the price of water in the engine tank. The station-master complained of these Arabs ; they had pulled him out of bed and told him to go away, on several occasions.

We reached Dera'at without further incident ; the brisk young Kaimakam, if a sample of *Huriyeh*, is a very great improvement on the old style. With him were two fellah Shaykhs complaining of the depredations of the very rascals who peppered us so unmercifully yesterday. It appears that these ruffians, who have no tribe but are an agglomeration of all the scamps from Koweyt to the Dersim, have been driven west by the drought and are growing bolder and bolder. The Kaimakam talked of sending thirty *mufrasis*—a small force against not fewer than 10,000 people, all well armed.

We camped at Dera'at station, where the staff seemed as drunken and as repulsive as at Ma'an. As regards the working of the Hejaz Railway, the following little tabulated statement may be of interest. It shows the trains which passed up and down from our arrival at Ma'an till our arrival at Dera'at :—

Two days at Ma'an . . . one special with the Emir-el-Haj.
One day, Aneze to El Hass . . . one special goods.
Two days at Ziza . . . one pilgrim train going north.
Two days, Kala'at Zerka to Dera'at . . . one empty train going north, two trains loaded with material going south.
At Dera'at . . . one ordinary mixed.

Therefore out of seven trains only one was regular, and only two were carrying any profit.

The next morning three pilgrim trains arrived in succession, while from the station emerged a vile Greek station-master and a Polish doctor. It appears that Dera'at is a place selected for medical inspection. The wretched pilgrims were bundled out on to the sloping embankment—a full thousand of them—and were beaten, cuffed, and kicked in the process. They were helpless, piteous, hungry, and cold ; for three nights had they been in open trucks, exposed to rain and frost ; old men and old women, from all parts of Asia : Turks, Indians, Persians, Bokharans, pinched, foul-smelling, desperately miserable. The inspection consisted in beating the pilgrims and counting their heads. "Voyez comme sont des brutes," said the Greek station-master ;

"voyez commes nous autres nous souffrent de ces viles créatures. Haydeh! Edipsiz!" and so on.

My blood boiled to see the way in which these unfortunates were knocked about by the *zaptiehs* under the direct orders of the Christians in charge. One poor old fellow, a Bokharan, fell down and was unable to rise. "Pull off his clothes," squeaked the doctor, suddenly hopping away. The *zaptiehs* did as they were told; then, after peering suspiciously at the wretched old man, the doctor ventured to look at his tongue, glanced at his armpits, turned on his heels and left him. The *zaptiehs* flung him his clothes, and I saw the unfortunate pilgrim with his trembling fingers vainly endeavouring to dress himself. Seldom have I seen a more heartrending spectacle than that white-bearded old man, kneeling in the mud, the tears running down his cheeks, his shaking hands fumbling with the rags he tried to draw around his shivering body. The fussy and incompetent Greek station-master had no joke on this occasion; he was too busy howling orders which no one obeyed, and waving a flag to which no one paid any attention.

A similar scene of vile cruelty was exhibited when the second pilgrim train came in, another old man being pulled out, apparently half-unconscious. To give him his due, on this occasion the doctor, having ascertained that it was not a case of plague, ordered the man to be taken under shelter and given a cup of tea; he then announced that he had not slept since 4 a.m., so he went off to bed and I to breakfast. As I came out from breakfast, I saw a rather incurious crowd of five or six persons standing by a man stretched upon the ground. I went up, and a hoarse inarticulate voice gasped out in a husky whisper, "Water, for the love of God." It was the old man whom the doctor had ordered to be taken to shelter and given tea. There he lay—a tall stately dervish, his shaven head bare, his long white beard fluttering in the wind, his hands clenched, his mouth slightly open, his eyelids fluttering horribly, his face livid with a dreadful pallor, his high-bridged, aquiline nose pinched and peaked, his body rigid and stiff under the slight covering of a tattered camel-hair cloak.

I ran across to the station-master shouting that the man was dying. "Eh be'n, s' qu'il n'est pas mort encore, ce type-là?"

returned the station-master with a laugh, evidently expecting that I should sympathise with him in his misfortune in being appointed to a post where people were so inconsiderate as to die. At this juncture I lost my temper hopelessly and completely, and I rejoice that I was emboldened to tell that station-master that he was a vile unfeeling cur, a wretch, a coward, a murderer, a hound, a worse than brute, and at the end of five minutes' cursing I was speechless and breathless.

"Est-ce que vous êtes venus ici pour y mettre l'ordre?" he replied, bursting with outraged dignity.

Once again I had found breath, and once again I gave him a plain unvarnished account of himself. He attempted to reply, saying, "Vous manquez de respect pour les officiers de la ligne." This gave me my opportunity, and I availed myself of it to such an extent that he vanished into the breakfast-room, whence the doctor suddenly reappeared, looking a trifle abashed. The doctor and I went over to the dervish; he looked more peaceful, his eyes were closed, his hands had unclenched, his body seemed less rigid.

"He's dead," muttered the doctor briefly.

"Get your stethoscope," I replied.

"Comme vous voulez," said the doctor.

We went to his room to get the instrument—it was found at last, but when we got back to the body a dog was beginning to nose horribly among the rags. The man was dead right enough, and, by the look of the corpse, of starvation and exposure. I found some fellahin, clean, brown-skinned men, who dug a grave at my charge, and I sent for a khoja to perform the necessary rites. So I saw the last of the martyr—for surely if ever a man was a martyr he was: friendless, old and abandoned, dead in a strange land among strange people, laid in a nameless grave beside that shrieking, creaking railway junction. I saw the group sway with its burden, and turned into the station room. The doctor was beginning a disquisition on the benefits of science, the value of no religion, the absurdity and brutality of Christianity, and the beauty of the worship of humanity; an hour later the station was teeming with Cook's tourists bound for Damascus—"See here, dragoman, kin we leave the grips in the cars right here?" and so on. What a world!

So to Damascus, which is a city where a thousand combinations of time, of place, of space, of ideas, of races form a single thing. How should a man describe Damascus? Come he from the desert, he will tell a tale of bubbling fountains, of a vast expanse of gardens, of luxurious baths, of feasts, of merry-making, of wealth, and of enjoyment. Come he from Europe, he may speak of packs of filthy dogs, of ruinous houses, of ill-kept streets, of ragged soldiers, yelling muleteers, greedy *antika* sellers, of ill-appointed hotels, tough mutton, and rank butter. Be he a historian, his thoughts will single out the tomb of Saladin, the court of the great mosque, the Graeco-Roman columns in the bazaar, the city walls; he will dwell on the past which is no more, the past of the Roman Emperors, of the early Christians, of Saint Paul, of the Moslem conquest, and the Empire of the Omayyad Caliphs, of the Crusades. And, if he be imaginative, of a moonlight night he will see in his mind's eye a wonderful procession stalking through the city square. First come dark, hook-nosed kings with curling beards and stiff embroidered robes, shaven priests, and sinewy soldiers—all fierce, bloody, and intolerant men, yet the founders perhaps of civilisation. These are followed by Persians, proud, luxurious and effete; then come Macedonian generals, Seleucid kings, Roman Consuls, Persians once again, then Greeks, Arabian Emirs, Turkish chieftains, Christian knights, and so on century by century in an endless sequence of time-forgotten legions.

Yet there is another Damascus, the Damascus of the Syrians, the Damascus of Moslem learning and fierce orthodoxy. In the city you may find learned men who can split more metaphysical hairs on the razor edge of unreason than a fifth century Arian monk—tall sombre men with full beards, snow-white turbans, dark robes and flowered waistcoats, precise and studious in the observance of ceremonial law, breathing prayers through their dark henna-dyed moustaches, inhaling the name of God at every yawn, slow of step and measured of tread, carelessly counting each pace on a dangling rosary which depends from their slender fingers. Perhaps you may see the very brother of the self-satisfied Pharisee—for surely the Pharisee was no Englishman and had no sanctimonious snuffle. He was like the Ulema of Damascus, essentially correct in the observance of the

law—the canting humbug, as opposed to the ceremonially correct humbug, was reserved for another land and another age. The cant of the English can never flourish in the East, for neither the Pharisee of old nor the Ulema of these days could dare deny the common functions of nature—they could be disgusted, but even an undraped pianoforte leg could never shock them.

There is also another Damascus, the Damascus of the people who dwell in it far away from the roaring markets, the jangling cafés, and the busy, impotent government offices. There are quiet, empty, narrow streets, where curs sleep on heaps of offal, and puppies stagger to and fro; where over-hanging casement windows crane over the roadway till they almost meet, so that the light of day shines only through a tiny crevice; where mysterious arches spring out of dead walls and the road is blocked by buttresses supporting tottering buildings; and where a clear sun in a bright blue sky above shines down on dirty timbers and yellow walls. Low, crazy doors open into these narrow streets. What is beyond them? Uniformity seems to end abruptly at these dead walls, for I have been beyond a dozen of them, yet no one interior in any way resembled another. In one case I found myself in a desolate, empty, cobweb-hung ruin, which looked as if it had been deserted for a century. On another occasion I found more than thirty men faking *antikas* in a cellar; in another, four dirty children and a grimy youth stained with chemicals, developing photographs; in another, a garden of orange-trees and a fountain where young men smoked and played backgammon; in another, an officer dwelt within two clean rooms and a kitchen; in another, a family of Greeks; in another, Jews; in another, a Moslem and his old wife, who, when I had been safely locked in the divan, came into the court and called blessings on my head. A great novelist will one day enter one of these houses, and what a wonderful city he will build around it! But it will not be Damascus.

One of the greatest misfortunes that could befall Damascus occurred when the great mosque, the ancient church of the city, was destroyed by a devastating fire. Priceless mosaics, magnificent columns of porphyry, the treasures of past ages, and a host of traditions were swept away in one brief disastrous

moment. My memory is too faulty to carry me back with any certainty to the time when the lost building stood; it is only of the new one that I may speak. The great mosque was destroyed —it followed that it must be replaced. One trembled to think of the monstrosities a competition in London might have evoked; one shuddered at the idea of the American College at Beyrut, with its contused and brutish ornaments, its soulless front, or the solid vulgarity of the Robert College, Constantinople. I say one shuddered, since these two places are the incubators of all that is supposed to be fashionable and useful in modern Turkey. The glorious mosque of Damascus was to be replaced by a modern structure; better grass-grown ruins—better a dunghill, one would almost say—than the senseless and loutish building which might have been erected. And yet it was not so. I entered with a feeling of sickening fear; I raised my eyes, and behold, I was in a building meet to delight the heart of man—two graceful avenues of pole-columns support tiers of a smaller order, which in turn uphold a wooden roof whose structure is sensibly left bare, save for a little gilding. The dome is indeed a failure, but the marble and inlaid stones make amends for much. The pulpit is perfect in its intricacy of design and simplicity of form. The tomb of Saint John is surrounded by brazen gates equal to any work of past ages —the Mihrab would not disgrace the Alhambra. In fine, the world has lost; but in a sense Damascus has gained, since her people have been able to show in lasting materials that the combined efforts of the tourist, the American missionary, the French railway, and the cosmopolitan company promoter, have not been able to crush their sense of beauty, to distort and deflect their view of proportion, or to annihilate their native genius. The Arabs of Damascus, Christians and Moslems, are still the Arabs of the Caliphate, the people of the Graeco-Roman period unaltered and unchanged.

From Damascus we took the train to Beyrut, where once more we found *Huriyeh*, in the shape of general anarchy tempered by light-heartedness and general freedom from hunger. Revolvers crack all night long; the *mastik* flows freely and openly; the cafés do a roaring trade, and nobody cares. Spies and police have faded away; while crime, like a growing child,

is beginning to spread its arms abroad. Some are looking a little gloomy, but meanwhile—" It doesn't matter."

We went by sea to Smyrna and on the ship we found the strangest people. There was the honourable member for Sana'a in trousers and frock coat, who took to his bed from sheer discomfort, and the honourable member for Mosul—" Yes, honourable lord, I am the one sent from Mosul." A small, fair-bearded, solemn-eyed khoja in cloak and white turban gave his views:

" The *Huriyeh* is a good thing, but there are many difficulties. Fifty men were killed at my election—the papers and voices were said to have been miscounted, but still since the world was so disturbed it was thought better to send me. There are doubtless many things to do. Firstly we must fix the land tax; yet the fellahin and the merchants will be vexed, the merchants since they like to buy the taxes, the fellahin since they like to bargain. Also must we hang some criminals—five, say—in public, unexpectedly and without warning; it would bring much peace and comfort. As for the Christians, they should serve as soldiers with priests to teach them. The railway *firman* must be altered lest the company rob us. God give us good counsel." This seemed reasonable, rough, good sense. The khoja was certainly better than the journalist member of the Committee of Union and Progress, who preached at length:

" Monsieur, this country has hitherto been corrupt, now it is about to march in the vanguard of civilisation. All is being considered by Parliament. We are sending students to study art and painting in Italy, marine courses in England, law and right in France, military affairs in Russia and Germany. We propose to cover the whole Empire with a vast network of commercial and strategic lines; to abolish titles, orders, degrees, and decorations; to institute schools eviscerated of superstition and creed; to encourage virtue and self-sacrifice; to stamp out despotism and feudality; and once and for all to impose the worship of humanity upon the people. To achieve our object it is necessary not to hesitate to perform any sacrifice which may be deemed requisite by the Committee. Armenia, Syria, Irak, and Arabia must be placed under martial law on the

dissolution of Parliament; the backward and reactionary peoples must be coerced into civilisation; Anatolia perhaps we shall leave untouched, since its people are obedient."

There was much more ambitious twaddle to the same tune, but of anything practical I heard nothing; of tremendous, elaborate programmes arranging for the enlightened education of princes of the blood a vast deal, also of labour colonies and the Borstal system and Italian art; but of business nothing.

Smyrna is a city of clean streets and Syro-Phoenicians in seedy trousers and squash hats as at present affected by advanced members of the Independent Labour Party. The Asiatic branch of the great Hellenic nation is displeased with *Huriyeh*; it preferred the old *régime*. No one objected to them under the old *régime*, and no one hunted them for various reasons. Firstly, the Moslems were too few in number to raise a successful riot in Smyrna; secondly, Greek bombast rolled off the official Turkish back like water, and Greek nationalism did not matter, since Turkish bureaucracy knew the Greeks to be too rich and businesslike to do more than yelp; thirdly, the Greeks had interests overseas and never worried inland. Consequently the Asiatic Greeks had nearly every liberty, and could quack, preach, and swagger to their hearts' content. Taxation was light; they had no military service, and were within the protective range of the guns of the fleets of Europe. All this gave the Greeks enormous advantages, of which they naturally availed themselves, in commerce, medicine, and law. Accordingly, the idea of a rejuvenated Turkey is not one to which they are partial. In the first place, it knocks on the head once and for all that excellent postprandial theme of a great Pan-Hellenic Empire; secondly, it means heavy Armenian competition; thirdly, taxation; fourthly, the hideous danger of military service; fifthly, risk of inquiry into the vast wealth and administration of Greek Church property. Consequently, among the squash-hatted gentry of Smyrna there is little enthusiasm for *Huriyeh*. It is simply a conspiracy to thwart the desires and wishes of the great Greek nation; a vile injustice to the descendants of Agamemnon; a great wrong, and so on. There is much in this strain, accompanied by the parading of Greek flags, demonstrations, and a copious stream of leading articles.

Revolver mania is as rampant in Smyrna as in Beyrut; but the revolvers are apparently discharged only on feast days of the Greek Church, or about twice a week.

During the railway journey from Smyrna to Kyrkaghatch I spent two hours with the ex-director of the Imperial School at Beyrut, who was exiled to Rhodes in 1902, but was released by *Huriyeh* and promoted to be an Inspector of Schools by the Committee. He seemed sound and practical, and was strong on the necessity of proper discipline—but perhaps this view was a new one, as he had apparently been stoned by the students of one of the colleges which he was accustomed to inspect!

Kyrkaghatch is a Graeco-Turkish town, more Turkish than Greek. In the Serai there was an official, who received me in the ruinous hall of audience of the Konak, with pilaff, yaûrt, and dried apricots. He was a despondent young gentleman, and had little hope of *Huriyeh* or any of its works. He expounded his views at length. The Constitution was proclaimed, not because there was any patriotic feeling, but because the Salonica soldiers had no food. The Committee of Union and Progress did not dismiss incompetents, but merely transferred unpopular men. The Parliament contains many self-seeking, unreliable scoundrels; the Committee, a number of ridiculous theorists and anarchists. The Parliament is the tool of the Committee, just as the Porte was the tool of Yildiz. Spies now report to the Committee, and the Committee delate and persecute in the name of Liberty by means of secret and corrupt agents, just as Izzet and others did. The Committee in Constantinople acts in good faith on the advice of local Committees composed of money-lenders, place-hunters, and land-grabbers. The rift between the civil and military services widens every day, the congestion of business is unaffected, the overcrowded state of the ranks of the Civil Service continues to affect honesty and fair dealing as adversely as ever. My friend offered no comfort, and had no alternative scheme up his sleeve; as he said, with a lonely smile, he was only an acting Kaimakam, and had nothing to lose or to gain one way or another.

I stayed the day in Kyrkaghatch, and received an invitation to spend the evening at the Club, which consists of a room over a café. When I got there I found that—for my edification, I pre-

sume—the assembly was heavily political. Khojas, unemployed officials, and local lawyers and merchants sat grouped around a table deeply intent on a very cryptic cartoon out of the "Papagallo"; but as time wore on the general talk worked round from politics to business and ordinary gossip, led generally by the Rais Beladieh. Of one thing I was soon convinced—*Huriyeh* is exceedingly urban, and no one seemed to take any interest in the country-side or agriculture. If the members of the Kyrkaghatch Committte are in any way typical, they speak ill for *Huriyeh*, for they were just the kind of scamps who would raise a massacre to-morrow if it paid. A good deal of "advanced" twaddle was talked, among other insane proposals the obligation of Imperial troops to wear a hat instead of a fez. I suggested *'egal* and *kaffieh* as more practical, and was consequently looked on with some astonishment. After I got to bed, I was waked up at midnight by a newspaper correspondent who was fuller of alcohol than brevity of speech required, and between sleeping and waking spent a barren hour discussing the fall of Kiamil Pasha.

Shabanlar I found inhabited by the most delightful Turks, wealthy, gentle, and industrious. Children and babies crawled round my tent, grey-bearded old men mumbled words of greeting, while the young men ran about fetching water, eggs, butter, and milk. The physique of these people is marvellous, and is the result of years of good feeding, healthy exercise, and honest living. The general countenance has fair hair and a rosy complexion, but a very decided Mongolian cast of feature—a Chinaman with a modified profile and an Englishman's colouring is a fair description. What a gulf separates this magnificent folk from the seedy intriguers who, it seems, must run the Government! If I could but catch 5,000 of these children and have them educated in a good wholesome English public school, what might not they do for Turkey? Yet, short of a miracle, these people must remain the prey of the Stambuli, and must ever be ruled by addle-pated robbers or blundering cranks. There is no bridge between them and power—barriers of prejudice, examinations, and a thousand complications hedge them off—and *Huriyeh* only means they can have the choice of voting for one of two incomprehensible blackguards, about whom they neither know nor care. Yet what

possibilities would there not be in such a peasantry if they had only a nobility to lead them! Is it not disgusting to look upon these noble fellows and think of the squalid crew in the Club at Kyrkaghatch who now hold the keys of power?

From Shabanlar we struggled over hill and forest, through rain, mud, and filth, to the village of Bademli. Here I made a great discovery. The national dress of the Khodavendiar province consists of a round jacket which stops below the shoulder blades, a belt and cummerbund two feet deep, and a pair of baggy trousers which begin below the hip. Query: How are the trousers suspended? I was so puzzled as to ask, and at last it was explained to me that they were held up by a piece of string which passed through a hole in the linen drawers and went round the neck. The more perilously near falling off are the trousers, the smarter their appearance is supposed to be.

Of our next town, Bogaditch, I can say very little. Its Mudir, the fifth in four months, was a youth of about twenty years of age, and seemed semi-idiotic. The people laughed at him, and between fits of querulous impotence he was in the habit of asking first an aged gendarme and then the Inspector of the Régie (also mentally deficient) what he ought to do. The upshot was that he took two letters of introduction that I had, and lost them, and kept me waiting all the afternoon trying to find them, and so wasted my day.

We covered the distance to Topalak (about 16 miles) in eight hours, and were welcomed by a pretty incident. The ground was very stony, and it was difficult to pitch the tent. Our arrival, however, had brought out the village schoolmaster with white turban, spectacles, and ink-horn, and his pupils. Seeing the difficulty, "Remove these stones," he commanded, and in five minutes, amidst wild squeals and shrieks, the ground was cleared for us.

From Bogaditch we proceeded to Balat. I found a Mudir sitting in a Serai decorated with the most extraordinary political cartoons—among others one from a filthy Italian paper of H.I.M. drunk on the floor of his palace surrounded by the ladies of the harem. This in a Serai seems a little strong; but apparently there is a class of liberal who look upon drunkenness as a sign

To face p. 489.

30° 40°

# Sketch between Balat and Adranos.

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 MILES

1. TSHARABASH
2. YELJILAR
3. TADA
4. TOPOLAK
5. KURSU
6. TASHKESSI
7. KARAMANLAR
8. KESSERLI DERE
9. IDITSH
10. TSHATASHAM
11. 4 Great springs
12. TEPEKALE
13.
14. KESUR
15. YAILA (CHIFTLIK)
16. ADURU
17. OSMANLAR
18. MAZLUMLAR
19. GUNEK K.
20. GINIK K.
21. ,, ,,
22. KARACHUKUR
23. ORKHANLAR
24. BAZAR
25. GULENKA
26. TEPEJI
27. KAULANAR
28. AGHALAR

ADRANOS

Dizleri D

(High jagged rock)

Balat

39°30′ 39°30′

Alatsham D.

Tsharabash

30°

London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd.

Stanford's Geogl. Estabt. London.

of emancipation, for I gathered that the meaning of the picture was simply that the Sultan was no longer fanatical. In Syria, as I have said, the outward sign of *Huriyeh* is a light-hearted anarchy; here in Anatolia a general moral debauch seems to have taken hold of the *mektebli* class. A muleteer whom I discharged to-day spent all his time singing "Liberty—Equality —Fraternity," the reason being that the Committee at Smyrna released him from prison, where he was undergoing sentence for his third murder.

The more I see of the official working of *Huriyeh* the more despondent do I grow. There is no one to lead—nothing to appeal to in the class who might lead, except rubbishing, theoretical balderdash about humanity on the sentimental side, and greed on the practical side. These schoolboys have no honour, for they laugh at all that is honourable; they do not respond to any call such as that of Osman Ghazi, of Orkhan, of Sulaiman the Magnificent, of the Abbasid civilisation, of the traditions of the Turkish people. There are no Samurai in Turkey—there is nothing of their own that they are not ashamed of, from the sobriety of the peasants to the devotion of the soldiers. They hanker after promotion and squalid debauchery, and they speak with more reverence of some drunken Frankified penny-a-liner than of Kara Osman or the battle of Kossovo. They seem now even to have as little confidence in Parliament as anything else; and these are the people who have carried things through on the backs of the half-starved soldiers. The Revolution allowed these prattling creatures to obtain power because the sentiment of the common people was against the Sultan; but beyond this fierce negative instinct I can find no trace of the people really doing anything themselves, and consequently the scum of those sinks of iniquity, the schools, have their way.

It took us three days from Balat over the mountains to Adranos. On the way we spent a night at Orhanlar, a village with a school with five hundred pupils, who learn to become khojas and wear white turbans in order to avoid military service. The scholars teach one another to read and write when the humour takes them, and have three months' vacation and three months' study alternately. Every class is divided

into sections of twelve, and the pupils take it in turn to bring provisions of flour, rice, figs, and butter, sufficient to feed one section for a week. This fountain of knowledge is presided over by seven old Shaykhs, who are the descendants and relatives of a certain Hajji Daud, who died more than sixty years ago.

In the Serai at Adranos I found an elderly Georgian Kaimakam with a vast nose and an eagle eye, and a young Captain of Gendarmes with a consumptive cough, who consumes 2½ *okes* (about 3 pints) of *mastik* daily. This latter gentleman put out his tongue at the Kaimakam while the latter was entertaining him in the Serai, whereupon the Kaimakam informed me that he had dismissed him three times but that he had always returned. However, glory be to God, a staff officer had made a tour of inspection that morning and had seen him, so that the Kaimakam had hopes of being relieved of his presence.

The drunkard remained swaying amicably in the doorway while the Kaimakam explained. After I had lunched, the Kaimakam invited me to his house, so we left the Serai. The drunkard followed us at a distance with Jacob, imploring the latter for some brandy, whiskey, or any other hot, burning drink. En route the drunkard met a turkey—the turkey gobbled at him—the drunkard drew his sword and challenged the turkey—the turkey flopped and squawked—the drunkard advanced—the turkey stood its ground—the sword flashed in the air—the turkey sank to earth, its head cleft in twain—the Kaimakam's orderly philosophically picked up the body, and a gendarme led the drunkard away singing a song of victory. "He is quite unsuitable as an officer of gendarmes," explained the Kaimakam. "It is very shameful, for he is the only son of his mother, and a descendant in the male line of Sultan Isfandiar." Isfandiar ruled at Kastamuni in the fourteenth century.

The Kaimakam proved to be a man of some character, as Georgians often are. By popular consent he had survived the coming of *Huriyeh*, and since the demonstrations had taken place he had liberated all exiles, but by sheer force had kept criminals under lock and key. He had great hopes of *Huriyeh*—serious hopes—though he admitted the difficulties that stood in

the way, but clung desperately to his dream of a regeneration of the Moslems.

Two days took us from Adranos to Brusa. If there is one quarter of Anatolia which has something of the old Turkish spirit, it is that district of which Brusa is the chief city. Brusa was the capital of the Osmanli Sultans before they fell into the trap of Constantinople—when they still were men enough to face their counsellors and chieftains in the light of open day, before luxury and intrigue had made them the slaves of their own women and domestics. Brusa, the town chosen by the Ottomans as their capital, is perhaps the most charming city that was ever comprehended in their dominions. Behind it the mount Olympus rears its majestic bulk, shielding it from the winter tempests and the burning heats of summer ; before it stretches a magnificent valley whose rich and well-watered breadth is dotted with wealthy farms and villages, marked by groves of slim poplars, while on broken ground between the mountains and the plain lies the city itself. The chequered buildings, the dark-tiled roofs, the noble domes, are distinguished in pleasant contrast by the stately cypress trees, which spread their sombre gloom around each open space within the town. Huge stubborn masses of Roman masonry jut out among the modern houses, above which tower the tender spires of the graceful minarets, while on the outskirts gleam the snowy mosques and tombs where lie the ancient chiefs and leaders of the greatest of the Turkish clans.

It would be hard, indeed, to say whether Brusa appeals more strongly to the artist, the historian, the antiquary ; much of the charm of this ancient city lies in its atmosphere of peace and rest ; her colours of brown and white and red are toned and subdued with age. Above the blue haze of smoking hearths, the noises of her streets strike upon the upper heights, a confused, harmonious murmur, the barking of dogs mingling with the jangle of camel bells and the cries of hawkers ; while now and then can be heard the far off lonely call of the muezzin.

The world has rolled on and left Brusa far behind. Her Sultans have departed that capital which is now only the abode of their mighty dead. Yet Brusa does not display those

mournful signs of ruin and decay associated with vanished greatness. Nay, rather does she gain by her retirement from the stress and strife of government; there attaches to the spot a peaceful dignity and nobleness such as can be felt in the dark aisles and misty space of some of the great Gothic cathedrals or minsters of England, where past and present mingle together in a spirit of gentle friendship. At Brusa lies the greatest of the Osmanli Sultans, borne thither from the bloody field of Kossovo; and to Brusa come the Moslem emigrants from the lost provinces of Europe, like tired pigeons, wearied with the storm, beating back to home.

In order to reach Constantinople from Brusa it is necessary to undergo a journey of seven hours' duration on board a steamer of 250 tons, of a maximum speed of six knots. On Turkish steamers all natural laws are permanently suspended. A Turkish steamer can proceed with engines which no ship-chandler would accept as scrap iron. A Turkish steamer can go out to sea with a starboard list of eighteen degrees and survive. A Turkish steamer can still continue to ply though she may not have been overhauled since she was cast aside as useless by her European owners in the year 1884. On Turkish steamers there is no reason why the chart should not be used as a tablecloth for the captain's dinner, nor yet why the chart-house should not be used as a hen-roost for the captain's fowls. Most of these conditions obtained on board the vessel which fate directed should bear me from Mudania to Constantinople.

Besides her crew she carried on a deck fifteen feet wide and ninety feet long eighty passengers and 250 sheep, not to speak of the various things that could not be crammed into her hold. The passengers were worth some attention, porters, drovers, merchants, priests, khojas, dervishes, Greeks, Albanians, and Turks, both old and young.

Before we had been two hours out at sea the various inhabitants of the absurd gasping, groaning, leaking, moaning little ship had become an organised Eastern state. The captain, who had ensconced himself in a crazy deck-house, had gone to sleep. A sailor smoking a cigarette sat with his hand on the wheel. Certain merchants who found a few square inches of deck vacant had spread out their wares and established a bazaar, where they

sold oil, bread, fish, and meat. Seven officers of the schools had set up a political club-house in the first-class cabin below; three khojas had carved out sufficient room for their rugs and were beginning to pray; a deformed dwarf had elbowed out a chink amidst some bales of goods and was giving a comic theatrical entertainment to a party of sheep drovers and others; five Greeks passed the time of day drinking brandy and firing revolvers; a nondescript gentleman, who, it afterwards appeared, was one of the engineers threaded the deck selling coffee and lemonade; from behind a canvas screen which had been rigged astern shrill voices sounded, admonishing the mutinous fat babies that endeavoured to crawl into the uncurtained region devoted to menkind. Amid all these various occupations of the ship's passengers there were only two which were new to me and which may be attributed to *Huriyeh;* first of all the advanced thinkers in the saloon, secondly the dwarf on deck. The saloon was ten feet long and as broad as the ship. It had no light save from a little square of glass in the deck and a petroleum lamp which swung over the table. No air save from the key-hole of the door. Underfoot bilge-water swirled, gurgled, and splashed up through a trap in the flooring. A hot puff of greasy air was occasionally wafted from the engine-rooms to add to the wholesome scent that emanated from a certain quantity of bread, garbage, and what not, that had in the course of ages slipped through the gratings. Around rats scurried boldly and fearlessly from hole to hole and chink to chink. Yet in this filthy den, belted, booted and spurred, sat the seven politicians and philosophers, unmoved by sound, sight or smell, smoking, drinking coffee, and orating. For six long hours did those heroes discourse to one another on the subjects of feudalism, despotism, equality, liberty, positivism, and fraternity.

While the aristocracy of intellect discussed below, the dwarf was amusing the common herd on deck. His entertainment consisted at first of a little preliminary buffooning, running on hands and knees, making faces and uttering various ancient quips. Then he developed a burlesque, put on a wreath of yellow paper flowers, and using a walking-stick as a guitar proceeded to sing sentimental songs in the character of a dancing girl expiring for the love of a lost sweetheart. This

is the form of humour peculiarly adapted to Oriental minds, and though perhaps part of the joke is not susceptible of literal translation it is often very good fun all the same. After languishing and weeping for some time the dwarf went through the final convulsions of unrequited love, and sank moaning and unconscious to the deck, amid the laughter of his audience. He then began another "turn," quite a new one from every point of view. He produced from his pocket a pair of spectacles and a piece of newspaper, curled his moustache, cocked his tarbush forward on his forehead, set the spectacles astride of his nose, sat on a box and began an imitation of the educated Young Turk politician in a café—mincing accent, finicking gestures, dictatorial and pompous manner were copied to the very life. Will it be believed that the ignorant shepherds, porters, and Albanians laughed, laughed more loudly than they had done either at the preliminary jokes or even at the dying dancing girl?

An "educated" young official emerged from below, and the performance came to a sudden end, the dwarf collapsed in a corner, and the audience fell gloomily silent.

. . . . .

Constantinople was very interesting, and was as perhaps it never has been before and never will be again. To spend a week in Constantinople was to enjoy the last few moments of a light curtain-raiser that precedes some great tragedy. There was at Constantinople the most delightful comedy in the playing. The Sultan, the Selamlik, the Embassies, Santa Sophia, and the pariah dogs remained; also there had come new things, political parties, deputies, editors, and reforms.

In the halls of the hotels and clubs were gathered the great thinkers of the hour, thinkers whose thoughts were so stupendous that they had to take off their tarbushes and put them on the table, just as if they were hats such as white men—I mean civilised men—wear. And the thoughts of the great thinkers when translated into words fully justified this lack of ceremony, for they were the quintessence and cream of all the foaming stuff that had been on tap and had flowed so ceaselessly into my ears since I had landed at Jaffa. It is a wonderful brew, this advanced thinking. The ingredients are Gallic and Teutonic:

Gallic in negation of religion, in insane attachment to phrases, in superficial logic, in purposeless irreverence; Teutonic in obstinate rigidity, uncompromising woodenness, in brutal assertiveness. The German parade-ground and the Parisian café have in truth produced a most wonderful psychological centaur between them. To hear a young man who has been reared on sweets in a Stambuli harem talking the borrowed cant of the French politician, in the borrowed voice of a Prussian drill sergeant, is an instructive lesson, a lesson so useful that one can think almost kindly of our Indian friend the failed B.A., after having endured it. Indeed, clippings from Burke and John Stuart Mill, delivered in a platform voice, do not grate so abominably. The great thinkers had been thinking and talking for nearly five months. They had written leading articles for even longer, and since their phrases were growing stale they were beginning to fight among themselves, to accuse each other of tyranny, reaction, espionage, and chicane. They violated the addle-pated Constitution they professed to adore, but did not remodel it. They abused each other in the columns of some scores of newspapers with no circulation; they proposed, opposed, suggested, and intrigued, but nothing had they done. The navy, with its 6,000 officers and 4,000 men remained; the civil service, with its countless hordes of greedy incompetents remained; the corrupt police, with its useless divisions, remained; the tax-wrung peasantry remained; the hopelessly congested finances remained: the war in the Yemen remained. After five months of speechifying these things remained because they were facts and the speechifying had all been about other men's ideas. The advanced thinkers would not face facts, and not all the catchwords, smoking jackets, English overcoats, dicky shirt-fronts, nor all the tin swords and spurs in the universe will ever make them do so.

Besides these congregations ot advanced thinkers there was also the Chamber of Deputies, where the representatives of the Ottoman nation were gathered together to vote accordingly as they were told. When I saw it, it was engaged in passing a law relating to vagabondage, unemployment, destitution, and so on. It might have been the Licensing Bill or the Daylight Saving Bill for all that it mattered.

It was not above eight days after I had seen and heard these things that some thousands of the kind of men who had laughed at the dwarf on the deck of the steamer dissolved Parliament, scattered the advanced thinkers, cheered the late Sultan, and went home. A few days later still, some hundreds of the kind of men who had discussed affairs of state in that steamer's cabin swept into Constantinople, and did that which has been done in the name of the unanimous will of the one and indivisible Ottoman people.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EGYPT, 1910

### *The Eastern Desert*

At Cairo the wise and the experienced will tell you strange and wonderful things of the Coptic monasteries of the eastern desert; but, alas! the descriptions do not quite tally. According to one authority, these monasteries were haunts of the foulest and most abominable vice and debauchery; opportunities of drunkenness and crime were the real attractions which drew men out into the desert; and hints of champagne and bevies of Nile singing girls served to complete a suggestive and lurid picture. Another authority informed us that the inhabitants of the monasteries were foully dirty, loathsome of appearance, diseased, and mostly mentally unsound—in fact a collection of naturals and cripples expelled from the world of men which they had only served to cumber. Then there was a Frenchman who had written a book—a beautiful, tantalising, exasperating book in the most beautiful academic modern French—a meandering work which proved its author a man of some learning, culture, polish, brilliance, and poetry, but one who, owing to excess of these excellent qualities, failed ever to come to grips with his subject. My Frenchman scintillates without illuminating; he sees too much and yet too little. Camels' souls, priests of Ammon Ra, golden deserts, sinister defiles, historical gossip, archaeological reminiscences, sunsets, sunrises, and minute and beautiful grammatical constructions, give very little foundation upon which to build.

Accordingly, we decided to go out and see this convent of

St. Anthony for ourselves. It lay beside the Red Sea, five days' ride over the desert, a strange desert inhabited only by woolly-headed coastguards in the Egyptian service—beautiful polished ebony Sudanese dressed in jerseys, riding breeches, puttees, and tarbushes of khaki, with a noble hackle of ostrich plumes on one side. They are most effective gentlemen, who salute smartly, stand to attention, and maintain that preternaturally solemn countenance which all the real black race assume when in office. To the traveller riding southward, this desert coast road furnishes an extraordinary contrast and gives an odd enough turn. On his right hand lies the grimmest of un-inhabited lands—rocky, parched, empty, desolate, unknown ; on his left, within three miles of him there ploughs a steamer with deck-stewards, old ladies, liverish civilians, *sahibs*, *memsahibs*, invalids, tourists, deck-cricket, sweepstakes, cocktails, concerts and all those devilish accompaniments of English travel ; while before his nose bobs and waves the grey head and neck of the ship of the desert.

Five days of this, and he comes where few people come, to that monastery of Anthony, the sainted Abbot. A huge wall of rubble forty feet high and more than a mile in circumference encloses the place, which has but one entrance. Beside this one entrance, however, there stand two vast niches, for all the world like two blocked-up gateways, were it not that they were obviously built for some purpose. Above one of these niches is a wooden ledge with a trap in its floor, beside the gate a little turret with a bell and stone to steady it, within the niches remains of fires and ashes and blackened stones—all this not a little puzzling if one but pauses to think.

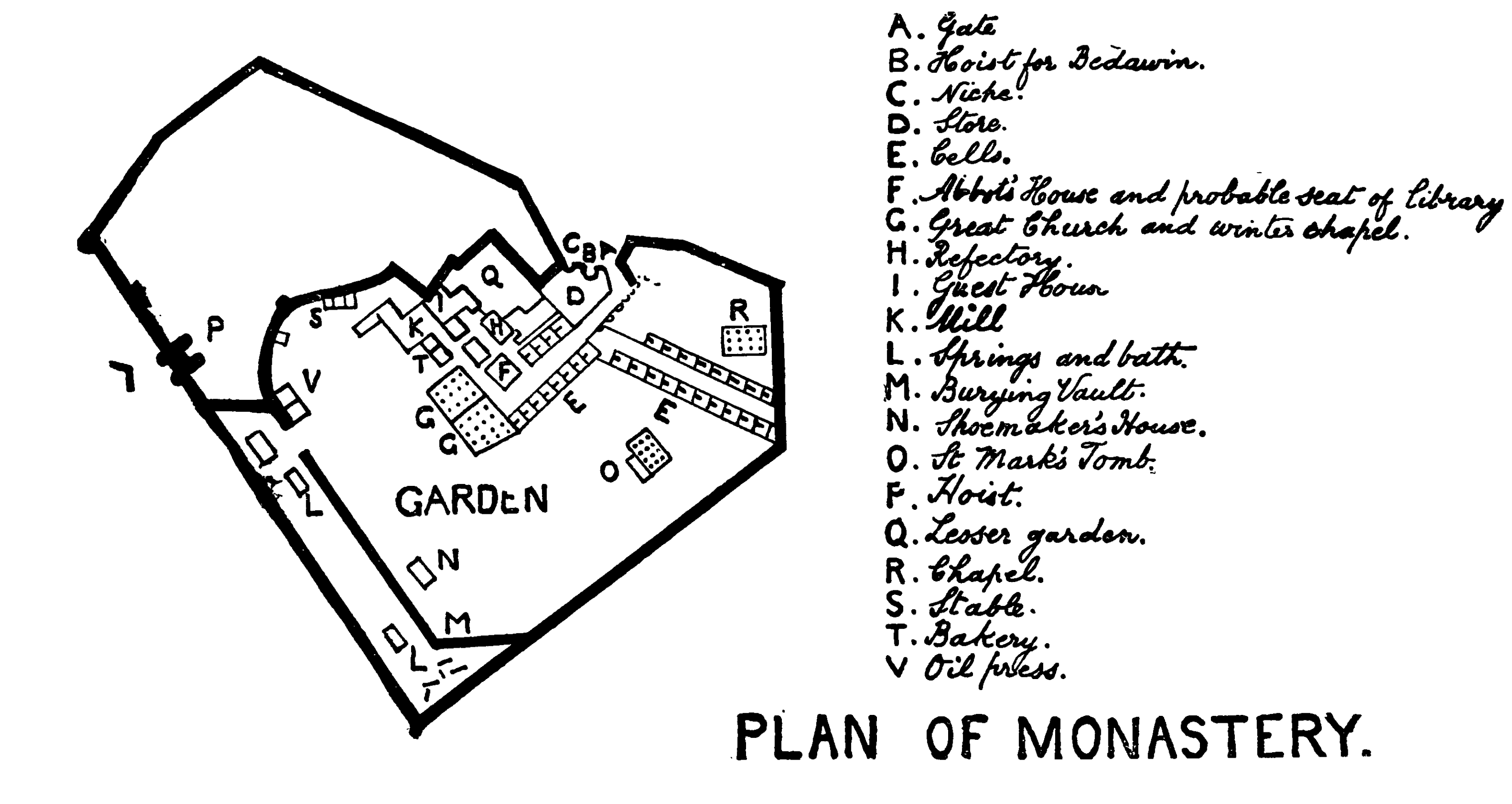
We rang the bell, a ridiculous tinkling affair, cracked, weak, and crazy, with a hoarse, thin, dusty little voice, chink-a-tink-a-drink-a-bink-ti-tink-tik-a-tik-a-tink-a-tak-a-ti-ti-tink. For some ten minutes we rang it, and then beat upon the door of iron with stones, which gave a more melodious and resonant sound. Presently a black shawl fluttered over the battlements.

"Who are you?"

"Soldiers of the state."

"Welcome!"

"And travellers of consequence."




PLAN OF MONASTERY.

"God be with you!"

The shawl vanished and after some time footsteps were heard and voices behind the door—a grumbling argument, a rattling of wooden keys, a heaving and thrusting, a clanking of bars, a squeaking of hinges, and at last the door gaped, yawned, groaned, creaked, eventually opened slowly, and we were in the monastery. In a moment vanished all our preconceived notions of monasteries in the East, gained from monasteries in the West. In the East a monastery is simply an Arab village with a wall round it; and this of St. Anthony is a village of some sixty houses in two streets, with a larger and a lesser garden, a guest-house, a general store, a stable, a mill, small churches, a swimming bath, an oil press and four vaults.

Well, we passed the gate and saw the village before us, with perhaps half-a-dozen of the monks, gentle-eyed, brown men, both old and young, some in poor, blue cotton shirts, others in black gowns, with black shawls upon their heads. Each must needs kiss our hands, and bid us welcome in a manner at once humble, gentle, and civil. We were led from the gate to the domed porch of the great chapel, which stands at the end of the village street, about 300 yards from the gate, and there chairs were brought out, and syrup of roses, tea and coffee. The monks heard with great grief of the death of Butros Pasha. (Indeed I take the opportunity of remarking that this was the only occasion when I heard from Egyptian lips any condemnation of this beastly crime. The monks know what it means and grieve; the others know what it means and can scarce conceal their joy; while the Englishman wags his head and says, "This is a bad business about poor old Butros.") These monks are twenty-five in number, ten of them being priests and the rest brothers; there are also two servants, who may become monks in time. They seem to differ from Maronites, Nestorians, Jacobites, Syrians, Armenians, or indeed any native Christians I have met, in that they appear to have a very distinct idea of Christian charity. They seem to have no feuds or rancorous hatreds, and speak with unclouded brow at once of Jesuits, Franciscans and the Greeks of Sinai. "Our liturgies differ, but the Saviour is one," was a little phrase continually recurring, and said with a gentle far-off smile which was most comforting.

We stayed perhaps half an hour talking oι this and that, and then went into the chapels—a great one, whitewashed, for coolness in summer ; a small one, painted with rude frescoes, for warmth in winter. They both had altars and screens of good woodwork, inlaid with ivory in places and I think bone in others ; while for the rest, a few old and bad pictures, one good Arab lamp, some ostrich eggs and straw mats, and lecterns like Punch-and-Judy theatres form the trappings of two unpretentious churches. On the floor of the summer chapel lay olives drying, while the winter one was covered with mats.

Of the appalling filth so noticeable to some travellers, I saw nothing—no more and no less than in any ordinary Arab village The monks were not only gentle and civil, but the priests were by no means so ignorant as some would have them. Of history they knew not a little: the conquest by Amru-al-As and the taxes of Omar, the follies of Hakim and the villainies ot Ed-Darasi, the riots and raids of the Berbers, were all things referred to in casual conversation, betokening either some reading or at least some intelligent conversation. Not very much, you may say, but far beyond the native Christians of Asia Minor, or the scholars of the American Missionaries and other perverters of youth.

We left the monastery to go to lunch, but not before a kid and more than twenty of the finest wheaten loaves were pressed upon us—" It is little we have, but that little is yours," and so on ; but really meant and no return expected. In the evening we returned to hear the choir office, for indeed these monks have offices—one at midnight, one at four, one at seven in the morning. We went into the chapel and found the monks and servants and brothers scattered in various nooks, but roughly in order of precedence—servants at the bottom, then the brothers, and the priests within the screen. A low sonorous murmuring filled the place; each monk and brother was repeating the office, which I think does not vary with the day; the chant was rapid, articulate monotone, full-chested, not nasal or whining and there was a look of attention and meaning which seemed to me new in Eastern Christians. By the door an old blind brother repeated his prayers with rapt sincerity, hands out-stretched and head upraised. Occasionally one of the priests

beyond the screen would turn and say which prayer was to be repeated. Sometimes the chant would change to a brisk measure, the cadence of which was familiar to me. The service lasted about an hour, and we distinguished the Gloria in Excelsis, the Pater, the Sanctus, the Creed, and several Psalms in Arabic, besides something like litanies in Coptic. It ended abruptly with a slow unsystematic filing away. I noted one thing particularly, and that was that the Rufai dervishes are undoubtedly beholden to the Coptic monks for much of their *zikr*—the rapid cadence, the full monotone, the sudden changes, and above all, the rhythm of their chants are, I feel pretty sure, identical, and hardly by coincidence. On our way back to camp we passed an old brother in his cell, ninety years of age, blind, and nearly toothless. "I would salute you could I lift my hands," was his greeting and farewell.

The next morning we went to mass at 7.30. There are three masses a week—Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday—but daily in Lent. I had been prepared for some slipshod slovenliness at mass, and trembled; but it was a great relief to find that these fears were unfounded. In the dark church the office was continuing as on the previous night. The priest who was to say mass stood before the central altar but not within the sanctuary; he bowed and prostrated before the altar much as Moslems do, and censed the altar from without. Then he stood before the altar with a lighted taper held parallel to the ground, and signed the air with a sign of the Cross, which reminded me indeed of Egyptian monuments. While the office continued to be chanted, the priest and a server went within the sanctuary and vested by the simple method of selecting what they wanted from a heap of garments lying on the right of the three altars. They then came out, the priest in a red cope and black turban, the server in white with a white turban, a white hood with a large red Jerusalem cross, a tunicle with the same device on the back and front, beneath all a plain alb or shirt embroidered with silver. They went out into the body of the church and came back, then prostrated before the altar and went into the sanctuary, when the priest washed his hands, turned, and faced the church —all this while the monks sang. Now the server came out and was given by one of the monks a tray of little round cakes of

bread and a flask of wine. With infinite care and much ceremony the priest selected one of the cakes, compared it with each of the others, and then anointed it with wine. After the remainder had been anointed also, the tray of anointed cakes was taken away, and the selected cake was put upon the altar and wrapped in a pall ; the wine from the flask was poured into a large chalice and also wrapped up.

Then the mass proper began—the Gospel, a long selection from Exodus, being read aloud in Arabic to those in the church; after which various psalms were named by a monk and sang by the rest, one old monk in the darker parts calling lustily on the monk who named the psalms to " speak up that men may know what to do." Mass proceeded up to the consecration when a sacring bell was rung in the tower and all prostrated. Communion was then given to the server alone, so far as I could see: the Host was broken in pieces, dipped in the chalice and given with a spoon ; each time the server partook he walked once round the altar with a kerchief held to his lips ; he partook three times in all. The priest then consumed what remained, and drained the chalice ; he then washed his hands with great care, and took three great ablutions, the chalice being filled each time ; the chalice was then wiped, dried, and set aside. The priest then turned to the church and said, "May God bless King Edward the Seventh, King of England, and his sons. May God bless Mark Sykes, his wife and his children. May God give rest and succour to the soul of his servant Butros." Then each monk in his order came and was blessed by the priest, then each brother, and lastly the servants—the blessing being again reminiscent of the dervishes, as the priest stroked the cheeks of each man and blew upon his forehead.

After mass the monks and brothers and ourselves were given the remainder of the blessed and anointed cakes from which the altar-bread had been selected. This looks like the origin ot " pain bénit," and gives a considerable insight into the very early distinction between blessed bread and communion.

After breakfast we took a general view of the monastery. In the garden there is a small church dedicated to a local saint named Mark or Murghos, who died within the walls. I noticed a picture of him holding a rosary ; the rosary is part of the office

of the Antonine monks, and consists only of Divine praises in short ejaculations like the Moslem rosary. In the garden, which is only badly kept, there are vines, olive trees and date palms. In one corner we came across a little house, wherein stood a chair and a box of rusty tools.

"What is this place?"

"Once one of our monks was a mender of shoes, but two years ago he died." Here was his house—nothing had been moved; since he died his shoes lay in the corner, a bowl of olives, now dried and shrivelled, stood upon the shelf, grass grew under the stool which was half turned, perhaps as on the day when the old cobbler rose from his work for the last time.

### *The Western Desert*

Now if you take the train at Alexandria and travel westward you come to another land—a land neither of the Arabs of Arabia nor of the fellahin of Egypt, but of the folk who call themselves "sons of the Weled Ali." To visit their camps is to find a strange enough contrast to the Bedawin of the Shamiyeh, of Hejaz or of the Jazirat-ul-Arab. Frankly, I do not like these people. The Bedawin have their faults and their virtues, and among their virtues is an easy gentlemanly tolerance of other men's creeds, combined with a decent respect for their own religion, and a natural predisposition not to worry about other people's souls. Now the moment I stepped into a tent of the Weled Ali, I was immediately impressed by the fact that there could never be, and never would be, any fellow-feeling between them and me. Civil they had to be; but friendly or amusing, never. Tall, brown, stoutly-built, and with a puffy look about the cheeks, which seems a part of the Moroccan and Tunisian countenance, they were Arabs and something else; their white robes, white trousers, and fezes made them new and strange creatures; their eyes are small and cunning, and are set in a fleshy face, their beards thin, their complexion sallow. No guest-fire burns in the tent, and it is only lit under protest, and then not to brew coffee but a tea that burns the breast and silences digestion. "Tobacco is shameful—Coffee is shameful—Tea is from God." There is no "Salaam alaikum"—there is only a superior look; there is no

freedom, no ease, but a polite grumpiness which evidently conceals very ill a most dour and rasping fanaticism. These fellows are all most profoundly influenced by Senussi: the women are veiled closely and hidden behind harems, every stimulant is rigorously shut out except the aforesaid tea, and when Shaykh Senussi is mentioned a kind of holy shudder pervades the place. In the first tent I went to, there was no conversation. In the second, I was informed as follows:—

"Senussi is the holiest of men, a place of pilgrimage, a shrine, a Messiah, a fountain of pity. O, how virtuous a man he is—he can breathe virtues into other men's souls! Hashish eaters, drinkers of coffee, smokers of tobacco, and other filthy habited persons have recourse to him; he breathes upon them and behold they can never again abide the stink of hashish, coffee, or tobacco—they are cured of such shameful ways. Miracles he works daily—his greatest miracle was worked on an Englishman. This Englishman disguised himself as an Arab of Syria, booted in red boots, with *kaffieh*, *'egal*, and *abba* cloak. He imposed on all as a true believer, yet when he was five days' ride from Senussi, the Slave of Peace shuddered and said, 'I smell filth—there is a stink of impiety in my nostrils—Kaffirs are at hand—go forth and seek them.' And the servants of the Slave of Peace went forth and found this person in red boots and *kaffieh* marching in the desert with a face like a hyaena. And they seized him and reported to the Holy One. 'Smite him,' cried the Holy One. And they smote this one, and he admitted his lies and uncleanness, and he was turned away."

The tents differ from those of the Bedawin of the East, being of white hair and having tassels within, and windsails and ventilators. The lance has never been used, nor do they know the name of it. Mollahs live in the camps and the children are taught the Koran. Horsemanship is not considered, and there is no connection or interest between them and the people of the East. Prayers, groans, and pious ejaculations are the order of the day; readings of the Koran and hatred of unbelievers, I think, the mental outfit. Everything is put down to religion: white clothes are religion, tassels in tents are religion, food, drink, and everything else are religion. A mollah told me, however, that it would be possible to visit Zagbub under the

following conditions: if one agreed to leave all tobacco, coffee, etc., behind; further, agreed to say and do nothing unclean while in the oasis: further, came from the Turkish and not the Egyptian side, and sent a messenger humbly craving leave to enter. Then, indeed, perhaps it might be possible for an unbelieving Kaffir to approach this holy spot and the old humbug who lives in it.

## CHAPTER IX

### JOURNEY, 1913

I AM back at Constantinople again (22nd September, 1913). Four times, at almost equal intervals, have I been to Constantinople since the Constitution was proclaimed. What a strange mood the city is in to-day—after five years of progress, of folly, of squalid intrigue, of violent negation, of senseless destruction, of ignominy, of instability, of wars and devastating fires. Outwardly, the change is trivial. The streets are cleaner, the roads smoother, the dogs have gone and cholera has come to stay. There are fewer turbaned heads, fewer horses, fewer soldiers; more officers, more newspapers, more ruins. Gone is the palace, the retainers, the swarms of eunuchs, the gay equipages of the ex-Sultan's favourites. For the rest, however, it is superficially the Constantinople of old; there is still the same cluster of shipping, the same glory of outline and colour, the same gay perspective of villas, red tiled roofs, ashen-grey wooden houses, and masses of vast yellow barracks; there is something of the old noisiness and bustle. Yet there is at the root of things a deep change, the change not of life, but of death. The fall of Abdul Hamid has been the fall, not of a despot or tyrant, but of a people and an idea. The Sultan meant something to his subjects, his people something to him. Good or ill, he represented not only a system but life, a scheme of things, an idea, a tradition, a faith, a species of continuity. He ruled ill—in blood, confusion and terror. He stood for the old order, and fought for it craftily but childishly, bravely but narrowly, pertinaciously but despairingly. One able, frail, sickly, uneducated old man could no longer bear the weight. He willingly surrendered to the spirit of the age.

With him fell things good and evil, as they must on a Day of Judgment.

In the place of theocracy, Imperial prestige and tradition, came atheism, Jacobinism, materialism and licence. With the old order went the palace, its spies and intrigues, its terrorism and secrecy; with the new order came secret societies, lodges, oaths of brotherhood, assassinations, courts-martial, and strange, obscure policies. In an hour, Constantinople changed; Islam, as understood by the theologians, as preached in the mosques, as the moral support of the people, as the inspiration of the army, died in a moment; the Caliphate, the clergy, the Koran, ceased to hold or inspire.

The sober Turk was taught to drink; the faithful soldier to mutiny; religion was mocked and despised. Every beastly thought that the exiles of Abdul Hamid had picked up in the gutters of the slums and ghettos of the capitals of Europe burst forth in foul luxuriance. Cinema shows—vile, obscene, and blasphemous—brothels filled to overflowing, clubs where vice and politics rubbed elbows, scurrilous prints and indecent pictures flooded the city. The licentious anarchism of the *apache* of Montmartre, the dark terrorism of the Portuguese Carbonari, the destructive idealism of the French Revolution, the half-digested theories of Spencer, Nietzsche and Hartmann, the paralysing influence of a perverted freemasonry fermented together, and produced a strange compound of negations which replaced the power of the fallen Caliphate. Constantinople, a city of intrigue, secrecy and incompetence, was a natural nesting ground for the gestation of such spawn.

Superficially, the new Turkey was progressive: a mock Parliament made mock laws; mock ministries and mock ministers rose and fell; a mock counter-revolution served as a pretext for shattering even a semblance of authority, and set up a mock Sultan. The new occult powers which had supplanted the forces of obscurantism continued to break the last bonds of tradition. The Albanian nobility was disgraced and insulted because it was feudal, the best of the Kurdish Chiefs were betrayed or slain for the same reason; but the anarchic revolutionary organisation of the Armenians was encouraged because its power was opposed to the traditional and conserva-

tive forces of the Armenian Patriarchate and the Clergy. The Greeks were cold-shouldered because they stood by their ancient rights. Zionism was backed because it was bad cosmopolitanism and finance.

Puffed up with pride, the puppets of the new régime insulted where Abdul Hamid had conciliated; used violence where he had used diplomacy. Then came the reckoning. One by one, the old privileges of the old order were refused to the new. The suzerainties of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Eastern Roumelia were lost, then Tripoli was snatched away, then the unnatural Balkan Confederation was made possible, and Turkey-in-Europe was lost, and lost as no Turkish territory had been lost before—lost because dissipated, half-educated, emasculated *babus* could not lead a disillusioned peasantry whose God had hidden His face from a faithless people.

Hitherto bribery, corruption, treachery and neglect had made of the rearguards of retreating Ottoman armies hosts of martyrs, whose hapless fate had something infinitely noble and pathetic. Ragged, unfed, outnumbered, outstripped in arms and equipment, the regiments of the Sultan had fought their long fights under their ignorant old peasant officers with a dogged resolution, regardless whether they won or lost so long as they did their duty. But here was a different story. The regiments of the new régime were but huddled masses of well-clothed, well-equipped men, fired by no hope, upheld by no ideal, deserted by the craven, intriguing, shameless degenerates who had presumed on the acquisition of a smattering of Western catchwords and a profound experience of Western vices to endeavour to regenerate an empire.

It is easy to understand why Constantinople is changed more in essence than in appearance. The old evils, it is true, have gone, but new evils have come, and the old virtues are dying. Go where you will in Constantinople, you will find no signs of hope or vitality.

The soldiers in the barracks are not the bold, sullen type of Abdul Hamid's day. Before the revolution, the garrison of Constantinople was an unpleasant neighbour. The men were fanatical, truculent and rude; they terrorised the people, insulted European women and made life unpleasant; there was some-

thing of the pampered Pretorian guard about them, of the overbearing janissary, and yet there was something more. Innate in the small, thick skulls of those burly, blue-coated men, there was the idea that military service was the holy duty of a Moslem, that the years with the colours were sanctified in the sight of God, that each man was one of a privileged brotherhood whose greatest hope was to die for the faith and the Caliph. Now, the khaki-clad, bewildered levies who slouch about with puzzled pathetic faces have no such idea. The khojas and clergy who used to teach them and stir them are crushed and silent. There are no grizzled, deep-voiced, rough-tongued peasant "ranker" officers, who, though they could neither read nor write, knew how to bang a mutineer over the ear before he mutinied, how to take a jammed rifle to pieces, find a billet in a village, lend a hand in loading a mule, or how, when the day came, to make a joke when a shrapnel carried off half a company. Instead, these crowds of men are mere peasants, Christian and Moslem alike, dragged unwillingly from home, herded in barracks, and officered by peevish, effeminate youths whose German training amounts to no more than the assumption of a loud voice, and an absolutely exasperatingly distant and violent manner when dealing with subordinates—youths, moreover, who belong to opposite factions, who disregard all discipline, intrigue and quarrel among themselves, control their generals and assassinate their commanders-in-chief. Hysterical, pedantic, idle and vicious, what could be expected from the leadership of such creatures, what influence could they expect to have on the men they are supposed to prepare for battle?

As the organ of one secret society or another, the army, as far as its officers are concerned, is still a force, because the natural instinct of the conscript peasants is still to do as they are told; but as a machine for the defence of the empire, the army is past all hope unless new men and methods come out of the unknown.

German training was never meant for such men as the Asiatic provinces put forth. With them, a rough and ready disciplinarian with energy, a common-sense disregard of unimportant details, a readiness to share privations or hardships, a sense of humour, and a quick gusty passion, might carry Turkish soldiers anywhere; but modern Germany cannot teach these things.

Her machine-made officers and her military system are inhuman, precise, bookish and rigid—though excellent, of course, in Germany. Because they are so, they naturally appeal to the school-boy officers of Turkey. There is so much that can be learned by mere rote and mimicry, and a little German varnish can be made to go so far. A moustache improver, a ridiculous stiff swagger, a brusque, overbearing, staccato voice, can be mastered in a week, and once mastered can be assumed when required, leaving twenty-three hours out of twenty-four to idling, intriguing, secret drinking and any other illicit means of wasting time that Constantinople affords.

To understand the state of utter bewilderment of the modern Turkish soldier, it is sufficient to say that a man serving during the past five years in the Constantinople garrison must have seen an army, first deserted by its officers, and then mutinying through the influence of *agents provocateurs* ; a Caliph dethroned by the officers of another army, the rank and file of which was told it was marching to save him ; an army of Moslems led by unbelieving officers to shoot inoffensive khojas and clergy ; still another army ordered to fraternise with Salonica Jews, brigands, and Bulgar *comitajis* ; another army led to hopeless disaster and abandoned by its officers ; another army suffering from cholera and penned in fields, denied assistance and left to die ; the most popular general shot by a mob of subalterns ; the ablest general murdered in the open street.

So the Turkish soldiers of Constantinople are no longer the dogged, fanatical, disciplined men of Abdul Hamid's day, but a mere horde of helpless, leaderless villagers, misunderstood and misunderstanding, with no more enthusiasm or hope than a chain-gang.

If people say that the Turkish army demanded the recapture of Adrianople, believe them not. One clique of officers saw a means of saving their pimply faces, of remaining on full pay, of having a ridiculous military parade that they could boast about ; another crew of intriguers saw an opportunity of diverting attention from themselves. So Adrianople was taken, and because certain Powers and certain gangs of Levantine financiers foresaw unlimited opportunities of future blackmail, Adrianople remained occupied.

But it is not only the army that has changed in Constantinople: there is another change, even more menacing, dangerous, and lamentable. Under the old régime there still survived the mediaeval social system of Europe which reformers and American missionaries had so long endeavoured to eradicate—that is to say, that though there were class distinctions, there were no gulfs between the various grades of men. Particularly was this so among Moslems, but, in a less degree, it applied to the various Christian peoples. There was nothing odd in a girl of the people entering the palace, for the poorest *hamal* was as much a part of the scheme of things as the highest officer of state. The charity of the people was unbounded; there was a grand and noble toleration—the harmless idiot, the dogs, the poor, the beggars, the orphans, each had their place. Bitter feuds there were, savage animosities, constant terrors of outbreak of massacre—all this and more; but deep beneath the surface there was a wondrous kinship of men. The beggar came to the *selamlik*; the Pasha's carriage pulled aside to avoid the mangy whelp sprawling in the road; the dervish and the maimed beggar got meat and drink on the doorsteps of the rich; a blind man could block the traffic of Stambul and curse any who jostled him; no fatherless girl need seek a path of shame. But that has gone; the old hatreds of religion and race remain to plague, and a gulf 'twixt rich and poor has arisen—a gulf of education and dress—a gulf of false standards and false ideals—the officer now contemns his men, the *effendi* the *hamal*, the student the khoja, the new the old. The dogs were killed in 1909 with the same cruel fury, ruthless and senseless stupidity as the honest soldiers were thrown away in 1912. The beggars are hunted from the bridges and streets; the old Pashas have vanished with their carriages, and the new crush their way in automobiles. The healthy, orphan girl beggars have given place to throngs of cosmopolitan prostitutes. The trays of food for the poor no longer issue from the palace; and men are growing apart into two kinds—rich and poor, employers and employed, black-coated and ragged. European ideas are triumphing to the end. In Turkey, where, until the Constitution, no man had wanted for bread from his fellows, the first act of the mock Parliament was to invent a Poor Law. So, though the turbaned khoja, stately

and dignified, remains ; though the cry of the imam rings across the waters of the Golden Horn ; though the *hamal* staggers under a cottage piano ; though a dervish can still travel half-price on a Bosphorus steamer ; these are all of the past—shadows of vital things which have gone, and which, with their faults and virtues, have no part in the squalid facts of to-day.

It was with small grief that I left Constantinople to set out for Brusa. At Brusa, the new régime has done little harm, and, by a freak of good fortune, some good. The ministry of Evkaf, which is responsible for the maintenance of pious foundations and ancient monuments, is the only one in which real, unselfish work has been done during the past five years. Owing to the inspiration and genius of Kemal-ed-din Bey, its chief architect, a series of restorations have been undertaken and carried out in the various mosques and tombs, which must command the admiration and respect of every lover of Art. Kemal-ed-din is not only a student and a man of taste, but has one quality which every educated Turk I have yet met lacks, and that is a capacity for appreciating the genius of his own country. Perhaps the only living architect who can compose original work of any value in the Saracenic style, he has gone to the bazaars and native shops for his craftsmen. Whenever anything had to be done, he got the traditional man to do it, with the result that his restorations and his new buildings vibrate with life, are instinct with hope, and make cosmopolitanism appear as ridiculous and absurd as in reality it is. Had anyone of such originality and sympathy taken in hand the army or the civil service or any public department, we should not to-day be face to face with the grotesque array of failures which confront us. Kemal-ed-din is, as far as I know, the only man in modern Turkey who has dared to believe either in himself or the past.

At Brusa, there is one of the most striking examples of M. Pierre Loti's hallucinations. That distinguished Frenchman has set his gènius and his command of language to the singular task of endeavouring to show that there is no distinction between the true-believing turbaned and the unbelieving black-coated.

At Brusa, in the butchers' quarter, there is a monastery of Mevlevi dervishes. For some reason or other, storks and other birds have been pinioned and kept in the vicinity of the

monastery from remote antiquity. At present, the collection consists of a vulture, an eagle, one of whose wings has been completely cut off, and four or five miserable storks with not above five wing-feathers left. These wretched creatures, in the last degree of thinness and misery, pick up bits of offal and refuse which the butchers throw them. A more revolting sight it would hardly be possible to see. To M. Pierre Loti this offers an opportunity of dilating on the kindness of Turks to God's dumb creatures, and of painting a side-piercing picture of a birds' hospital where gentle philosophers tend the ills of unhappy wounded fowls whom cruel men have injured.

As a matter of fact, the cause of the birds' presence in this place is well worth investigating. No one seems to know why they are there, save that they are lucky, and have always been there. They may, of course, be no more than the crystallisation of the whim of a Mevlevi dervish of the last century, or they may be the survival of something very ancient indeed, as the sacred carp in the ponds of Urfa and 'Ain-el-Arus, which passed from the Priests of the Moon to those of the Church, and thence into the hand of Rufai dervishes and shaykhs.

I met a modern Turk of the most modern type at Brusa. His mind is worth consideration. He studied for three years in Paris, was exiled for seven years in the solitudes of Pontus by Abdul Hamid, and, after undergoing many real hardships and privations, at length came into plenty and employment. Now, ups and downs of fortune, privations and woes, might surely knock something in and out of a man, might show him what mattered and what did not, and give him some insight into realities.

Yet this fellow who knew Europe, who had tramped as a prisoner through the snow, who had qualified in a learned profession, was the same pedantic, shallow-pated, oblivious little ass whom I had known eight years before. He attributed the troubles of his country to the fact that peasant women put their fingers into their babies' mouths whenever they cried, and so injured the moral fibre of the nation from birth by inculcating a lack of self-restraint. He believed that water infected by cholera or typhoid was rendered innocuous by the addition of a few drops of lemon juice; and, his employment being in the

Department of Public Health, his only idea of sanitary reform was to shut up the public baths and destroy pariah dogs.

At Brusa, also, I made a closer acquaintance with the results of the late war. Owing to the fact that all horses were said to have been requisitioned for the troops, the animals brought forth for my inspection as mounts suitable for an English traveller riding over fifteen stone consisted of one blind horse, one farcy horse, and one suffering from mange. The Greek to whom they belonged announced that he would be prepared to let them out for the trifling sum of eight francs a day each. Of course, he added, "I should require you to find their food, and pay for their return journey at the rate of twelve francs a day each!" "Perhaps," cried Jacob, "you would wish us to provide you with—" but Jacob's Rabelaisian retorts are only fit for after-dinner conversation. Suffice to say, the Greek and his veterinary specimens retired precipitately.

At last horses, mules and other four-legged things were found sufficient to carry us and our belongings off to Kutahia.

Once out of Brusa, one experienced some relief at getting away from the constant, visible and audible signs of government. It is always a satisfaction to get to human things, and, though governments may rise and fall, and intrigues may succeed and fail, it will be long before the Turkish peasant will lose his humanity and simplicity in his own village.

We were accompanied by a sergeant of gendarmes who was so thoroughly imbued with the new style of thinking that travelling was positively painful to him. He had only one expression in any language but his own—"à la Turca"—and he made a point of repeating this on all occasions in varying tones of contempt. When we passed a groaning ox-wagon, he flourished his whip and pointed—"à la Turca." When we passed a house that had fallen into ruins, he laughed out—"à la Turca." Where a woman veiled herself, he winked—"à la Turca." When a dog barked, he whizzed a stone at its ribs, murmuring—"à la Turca." When a muezzin gave the call to prayer from a hillside, he cocked his thumb and grunted—"à la Turca," adding in his own tongue, "damned lying jackass." In fact, this old man with a dyed moustache could let no opportunity pass without making the same irritating and disparaging remark. The

ride from Brusa to Bairakli *via* Changara-Baghli-Souk Punar is as delightful a one as good air, gentle people and fine scenery can make it. At Bairakli, it was announced that there was much game—hares, bears, boars, stags, and I know not what more. The sergeant of gendarmes harangued the village elders, and with great solemnity a chase was arranged on the ensuing day. The details were gone through, prices were fixed, men were engaged, and I was to be called at four in the morning. Need I say that next morning I arose at four, and, after sending four messengers down to the village, waited until eight o'clock when at last the elders reappeared, saying that they had understood that it was in the afternoon I wished to shoot? "À la Turca," said the sergeant, and so closed the episode. We left the village elders very aggrieved that we would not stay a few weeks, and see if their promises of sport would not be fulfilled.

From Bairakli we went to Djemiler and so to Devrent. At Devrent we found that infinitely rare bird, a rich country Turk —a village squire who had built a house for himself and a mosque for the public. The mosque was a most delightful piece of childishness, typical of these simple folk. Though the village was foul and ramshackle beyond words, the mosque was a scrupulously clean house of hewn stone, with a decorated ceiling of wood, and white-washed walls painted in gay colours with fruit and flowers. There was a blue gallery for ladies, in which a child of two could not have stood upright; a red pulpit, large enough for a doll's house; a wonderful presentment of the mosque at Adrianople and the mosque at Medina; and a tiny reading gallery with a clock painted on the wall behind it, lest students should be too long in class. Three old men opened the door and waited for our cries of approval; and who would have been so cruel as to deny them? The squire awaited us at his mansion, and with honest pride showed the four state apartments, each about twelve feet by twelve. In one was a brass bedstead, which was obviously a ceremonial piece of furniture, for the room in which it stood was evidently never used. To a well-to-do country Turk, a brass bedstead is symbolical of wealth, luxury, power, progress and knowledge. Consequently, it is not a thing to be hidden away in a bedroom or tarnished by use, but rather to keep somewhere near the front

hall, covered with as many rugs and quilts as can be spared from daily use.

The Squire showed us into a room, hustled round us with cushions, presented his children to us to kiss our hands, and then withdrew with intense self-deprecation, which, in Anatolia, is the height of hospitality. Then came to us a procession of victuals. A hundred years ago, it would have been a string of men bearing platters on their heads; but everybody is ruined by reforms, so the one servant of the house made up the procession himself. First, he brought coffee, then a jug of water, then a table, then spiced mutton and water-melon (the very thing at half past three in the afternoon), then soap and water and a ewer. When we had disordered the food sufficiently for politeness, the squire returned, crouched in a corner and, after a little hesitation, begged a favour: "Would the English Bey ask His Excellency the Governor of Kutahia to provide a village policeman? A short time ago, bad men came and shot at the house, and one fired a bullet through the door. They fired all night, and it was supposed that a bullet must have bounded back off the stone wall and hit one, because, after firing for a long time, some one had said, 'Oh'! Then they went away."

The next morning the squire came into the camp with Devonshire cream, tea, more water-melon, and more boiled mutton. He lent us horses and blessed us. May heaven protect him! He was a finer fellow than many who think themselves his betters.

So on to Tavshanli, past Phrygian monuments and tombs carved in the rock. These are attributed by the Turks to "Jenwis," and the story runs that every tomb was a fort, every grave a soldier's bed, and the largest tomb of all "Jenwis'" own palace.

At Maimul, just before reaching Tavshanli, there is a pond of fat carp, sacred to a saint. The fish are said to vanish and reappear and work all sorts of good luck.

At Tavshanli we were received with great state by many holy and eminent men, the greatest being Hassan Zeitun Oghlu. Hassan Zeitun Oghlu is one of those odd meetings of old and new. He is the usual Member of Parliament for the district. He is

a Sayid and a learned man. Most people would see in him no more than an old gentleman in a green turban and dingy black clothes. Yet he has at his fingers' ends more Oriental history than many European professors. He can rattle off dynasties, tribes, origins, genealogies. He knows almost all there is to know as to what people lived and what they did, between Bokhara and Tavshanli, from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries. In the bazaar there is a library which apparently belongs to his family. To it he took us. It was a kind of pigeon-cote of learning, within which brooded half-a-dozen wise men, with spectacles and large turbans.

The library, which was the only one into which I have ever penetrated, was a round stone building of about twenty-five feet diameter, with shelves and movable cases. It contained, on a rough computation, some six or seven thousand volumes; and five of the most beautiful illuminated manuscripts I have ever seen were brought out for our inspection. Here were, moreover, works of every description: glossaries, Korans, geographies, the works of Ibn Khaldun, Yakut, Edrissi, Tabari, Karamani, and so on. The librarian could lay his hand on almost any kind of book, nor were the wise men ignorant of what the books contained.

To any student this strange mediaeval survival is worth much consideration. Here, tucked away in a crumbling village, is learning and civilisation of a kind that even more than a bowing acquaintance with Turco-Arabia would not lead one to expect. Of course, it is the old learning, the learning of the middle ages. It has neither beginning nor end; it has no connection with material things, and it has nothing to do with making money or teaching people how to make money. Still surely it is not useless—surely it would be possible to save these little siftings surviving from the forests of the past, to foster them and prove them so that they might serve in a new age, full as hard and bloody as that in which they had their origin.

From Tavshanli to Kutahia in an *araba* along a preposterous road—preposterous, because (1) it had cost £15,000; (2) its proper maintenance would cost more than the district could afford; (3) the first section was in ruins before its last was finished: (4) the best part of the district through which it ran

was dry, level, and hard, and required no road: (5) the one rough portion of hill country was left untouched. Here was the new learning. Surely it is better to sit in a library and learn about great kings and travellers, of mighty Empires and their rise and fall, to wear a turban and look wise and clever, than to get a degree in a continental school of engineering, and, on the score of progress but really in a fit of childish vanity, perform such an act of colossal folly as this.

So to Kutahia, a town of mud and ruins, the poor shrivelled mummy, so to speak, of history, where are Phrygian monuments of the dawn of history, Roman columns, early Byzantine gravestones, later Byzantine fortifications, baths and *khans* built by the Seljuk Amirs, remains of the palaces of the Othman's days, and now to-day squalor, dust and vermin. To drive through Kutahia is a torture; to walk, ignominious. How can one maintain any dignity stepping over heaps of refuse and slipping from one stone to another? There is nothing of note or interest in the place, save one little spark of life. Kutahia, for all time, has been famous for its clay and pottery. During the fourteenth century, there came to it Armenians from Persia, artists of cunning and taste, and there grew up a great industry, with the result that the mausoleums and mosques of Brusa and Constantinople still blaze with glorious glazed colours set in wonderful orders and designs. The wealth and sacking of cities served to pay for these splendours. The business grew until nearly every house of consequence in Kutahia had its furnace and its kiln. Then came the lean years. The art faded away. The artists died with their secrets, and nothing remained save that men still made glazed pottery in Kutahia. Some sixty years ago certain Armenians and Turks began to think again of the old art—remember, the tradition was not wholly dead. By painful process, without chemists or knowledge, these men set out to do what their ancestors had done. By slow degrees, they re-discovered colour after colour and process after process, until at last they were able to imitate, at first distantly, and then more closely, the work that had been done in the past.

To-day, amid the dust and dirt of Kutahia, there is rising

up an artistic industry of which one dares to hope great things in the future. It is a little movement, a little sign of the fact that where there is life there is hope, that it is always possible to join up the present with the past, and that, if but the right men come in time, faint but still living traditions may yet be made into vital and flourishing realities. The Société Ottoman des Faïences de Kutahia is only modern in name. The kiln is a private cellar. The workmen squat about on shelves like bats. Their wives and sisters let out the portions in the attics and the shareholders sit about smoking in most of the unoccupied corners.

If I was cheered by the tile makers, I was equally depressed by the Government of Kutahia. The Mutesarrif, wearied with his office and pining for the delights of Constantinople, had abandoned his post and the eighty-seven officials who worked with him had gone to the capital in search of other employment, leaving the Hakim of the district in charge. This latter was a most undoubted "Personage," a learned lawyer, one who combined the dignity of an archbishop with the venerable appearance of a Patriarch, the wisdom of Plato and the scrupulous trimness and neatness which only a Moslem Theologian can boast. With flowing robe, snowy turban, austere, aquiline countenance, a full, grey beard, profound courtesy and solemnity, the Hakim of Kutahia was imposing in more senses than one. It was only when he began to talk that one was overwhelmed with mortification. The defeats, disasters, woes, plagues, and products of the last five years, the futile misgovernment of the last century, the hopeless financial and strategic position of the empire rolled off this reverend gentleman's mind like water off a duck's back. He was equipped with a whole battery of face-saving explanation, of excuses and reasons, so subtly worded as to be unanswerable, yet so utterly vain as to be maddening. Moreover, it was clear from the moment he began speaking, that he was not displeased with the position of affairs, and had no desire to see them any different. Though he held forth for an hour, his views were expressed in a nutshell in his peroration. "Therefore, since I have shown, sir, that our holy law is complete, satisfactory, just, and especially benevolent to Christians, that the whole of our troubles have

arisen from the interference of Europe, all we now require is rest and tranquillity wherein we may compose and consider those reforms which have been so long delayed owing to the unfortunate brutality of Russia and weakness of the Powers." What was even more exasperating was one's realisation that, on paper, this old gentleman had a perfectly arguable case ; that if one had resisted his eloquence, he would have scored all along the line and left one defeated ; and that the whole time he knew as well as I did what infernal, useless, hopeless nonsense he was talking.

From Kutahia we went to Eski-shehir by rail, where my wife most cruelly abandoned me and went home to England, and from Eski-shehir I proceeded alone to Konia.

Like Brusa, Konia has something of that forgotten age of Turkish supremacy ; and since Konia lies upon the great highway of Eastern and Western invasion and retreat, you may find a decided Mongol and Tartar strain among its peoples, high cheek-bones, oblique eyes and hairless face are not uncommon—lasting traces of Timur's armies. Orkhan's tribesmen, and the diverse hordes of Asia, who have in this instance absorbed the original population and not been absorbed by it. Yet the people of the great tableland are neither savages nor fanatics, but hard, enduring, solemn folk—patient beyond all belief, faithful and determined to the last, calm and phlegmatic, slow to anger, charitable to the poor, but withal obstinately bent on maintaining their place. These people have a notion that the land is theirs ; and neither concession hunter, limited company, nor Palace spy can disabuse them of this idea. Woe betide the stranger who would buy or seize their land. They will endure much to keep it and hold it—they have endured much. It is not because they are stupid that they bear the grinding tyranny of the Constantinople officials, the burden of double taxes in men, money, and kind, or that they are content with broken roads and unbuilt bridges ; it is because they feel that these evils are the inevitable price they must pay for independence from European control.

Whenever, in Turkey, I leave the villages and come to the hotels, I feel like one who comes from civilisation to savagery. The railway, of course, brings advantages. That is beyond

question; but it also brings much that is evil. It enabled the Turkish War Office to collect more men than it could deal with; it helped to drain Anatolia of inhabitants; it helps to increase the cost of living by drawing off the cereals and sending up the price of bread. Of course, this means more money; but it also means more poverty. The railway brings alcohol, dirty pictures, phonographs, and drinking saloons. Moreover, it produces a most horrible kind of greasy, grimy-faced, ragged, and unwholesome people, now well-paid employees, but formerly happy, wholesome peasants. As for life in the hotels, any *khan* is preferable to the noisy squalor and the saucy manners of the fez-wearing Europeans and hat-wearing Asiatics who are apparently the sole inhabitants of these places.

I passed the most interesting morning and afternoon in one day at Konia. Before lunch, I went to call upon the new governor, who had only been installed a few weeks. He is a man of some ambitions, and were he a person of iron determination and savage ferocity, he might realise some of them if he lived to be one hundred years of age. As it is, when, in a few weeks, he is removed to a different sphere, I imagine that he will leave Konia not very different from what he found it. He was engaged in discussing afforestation with a little, round-eyed, rotund German engineer wearing a red fez on his Teutonic head.

*The Vali* (*viâ* an interpreter): "I believe you have profound experience of tree growing."

*The German Engineer:* "Yes, Your Excellency."

*The Vali:* "Now, I have no doubt that you have observed that the whole of Konia and its neighbourhood is destitute of trees."

*The G.E.:* "Yes, Your Excellency."

*The Vali:* "Well, I think it would refresh the district and prove of immense benefit if the whole region could be completely wooded."

*The G.E.:* "Yes, Your Excellency."

*The Vali:* "The desert parts would be once more sprinkled with refreshing showers, the villages would have delightful shade, the roads would be less dusty—in fact, a great amelioration would be visible on all sides."

*The G.E :* "Yes, Your Excellency."

*The Vali :* "That being so, I wish to make a survey."

*The G.E. :* "Yes, Your Excellency."

*The Vali :* "And then I wish you to make arrangements to plant out a fixed area every year."

*The G.E. :* "Yes, Your Excellency."

*The Vali :* "The first year we should plant one million trees—"

*The G.E. :* ?

*The Vali :* "—and each succeeding year one million trees."

*The G.E. :* ? ?

*The Vali :* "Half should be fruit trees—pear trees, apple trees, cherry trees, and quince trees ; one-fourth, ornamental trees, such as pines, cedars, spruce, and fir ; the remaining quarter should be poplars and eucalyptus. Now, since the matter brooks no delay, I shall be infinitely obliged if you will prepare me your report so that I may send it to the Minister of the Interior for his approval."

The little German engineer tottered away like a stricken man. The Vali having thus closed the question, turned to other affairs with that relief which we all experience when we have disposed of a trifle which we have dreaded should slip from our minds, owing to its insignificance.

In the afternoon, I went to the *zikr* of the Mevlevi dervishes. This order, which has its origin and centre in Konia, is, above all others, renowned for the singularity of its devotions. The head of the order, who is known as the great Chelebi of Konia, is the collateral descendant of the founder. I will endeavour to describe the *zikr* as nearly as I can.

We were taken into the dancing hall of the mosque, which is situated under a large dome and occupies a square space of about forty by forty feet. It is surrounded by double galleries—one on the floor, the other a stage higher. For the accommodation of the people there is a recess in the right hand corner, where are the tombs of Jemal-ed-din and his successors. On the left, there is a little space under the gallery for the orchestra and choir. Between this and the tomb is a small raised divan for the accommodation of specially invited personages. To this spot I was taken, and from it I saw the whole of the *zikr* from beginning to end.

The air was heavily laden with the scent of incense. The lower galleries were literally packed with silent people. The polished floor was empty. Then into the recess came four figures—those of the Chelebi and the two elder Shaykhs. The Chelebi and his assistants were attired in ample, wide-sleeved gowns, which hang in exceedingly graceful folds no matter what attitude the wearer assumes. When he kneels, he is a perfectly proportioned pyramid of black; when he bows, the curve is counterbalanced by the backward sweep of the train; when he walks, his height is increased and his movements given an ease and solemn dignity. On the head is worn a semi-conical, brown felt cap, almost a foot in height, which, in the case of the Chelebi or the three elders, is surrounded at the base by a small black turban with one end hanging over the nape of the neck. This exceedingly simple dress achieves, merely by outline, an effect of grace and height, power and mystery. It is, in itself, a work of the highest art; the faint curves of the cap, the hang of the drooping cloak, are like the deft and perfect strokes of Velasquez—sufficient, complete, and final.

The four figures sat in silence in the dark recess, facing the black pall-covered tomb, at the head of which towered the gigantic turban of the founder. Then there broke forth from the younger of the four a voice of a quality very difficult to describe—a deep baritone with not even a suspicion of the strident, nasal whine which makes all Eastern music past European comprehension, yet with intervals and catches which were entirely singular. For some fifteen minutes the four black figures remained motionless in the recess while this strange voice chanted and intoned the praises of God. During this time, at irregular intervals, some twenty-five dervishes gathered in a circle around the square polished floor. Each one had his appointed place; each one observed the same formula. First, a profound obeisance towards the tomb; then returning to his place, where, after swiftly and gracefully kneeling on the floor, he made a complete prostration with the forehead touching the floor; recovering from which, after folding his arms in the ample sleeves, he remained apparently wrapped in contemplation. At the end of twenty minutes the whole of the dervishes were assembled. The singer ceased, and there broke from the recess

on the left a sound like that of a 'cello playing a slow and simple measure. It was so sustained, so deep, and so vibrant and ample a sound that it was difficult to realise or believe that it came from a flute. After a short interval, the Chelebi and his three colleagues rose and came into the centre, the Chelebi leading, and proceeded to walk to the sound of the flute in a processional circle round the polished floor. The dervishes hardly walked, but glided with scarcely perceptible motion one behind the other. When the Chelebi had made a complete circle of the room and was once more opposite the tomb of the founder, he made a profound bow, took two full paces forward, turned to the right-about, bowed to the next senior who followed him, then turned again and resumed his slow, processional walk, save that he did not bow to the tomb. The next then did exactly the same, and so right through the whole twenty-five.

Some idea of the absolutely perfect rhythm and the extraordinary slowness of movement can be gained, if I say that the procession never once stopped or accelerated its pace in order to make good ground lost during these obeisances, and that twenty minutes were occupied while the Chelebi made three complete circuits of the floor and three bows to the tomb. During the whole of this procession, the dervishes remained apparently wholly oblivious to their surroundings—eyes half closed, head occasionally nodding in obeisance, lips motionless, face absolutely still and impassive. At the end of the third procession, there was a hard sound of a piece of wood being struck by another, whereupon, with graceful and easy motions the dervishes, with the exception of the Chelebi and his two companions, slipped off their black gowns and revealed their dancing clothes. These consisted of a long skirt of thin stuff reaching to the heels, a broad girdle round the waist and a neatly-cut short jacket, with ample sleeves, ending above the hips. The removal of the gown made no interruption to the procession. In all cases but one, these were green, the exception being white. The Chelebi and the next senior stopped and faced the centre of the room. The music now was reinforced by drums and three voices. The leading dervish folded his arms across his chest, clasping his shoulders, and

began to turn until his skirts flew out in a circle a little below his knees. Slowly he unfolded his arms, pressing his hands against his sides until they rested on his hips. Then he very gradually stretched them out until they were almost fully extended from his body, the elbows only being very slightly bent, the palm of the right hand stretched upwards, that of the left downwards. Always turning, he still moved slowly round the floor. By the time his arms were outstretched, the dervish behind him had his hands on his hips and the next was beginning to move. The procession at first followed a spiral, then, when the spiral was complete, moving in three distinct circles, the circles continuing to turn. So, with gradual movements, the floor filled with graceful, whirling figures. The effect of the swirling draperies, the rapt expression of the men's faces, the turning of the tall, brown felt caps, the outstretched arms, the rhythm, the incense, the throbbing of the drums, the deep-toned flute, the wild, melancholy chant, produced at once an effect of sublime dignity and of intense abstraction.

The perfection of the training was most marked by the fact that, during the whole of the dance, one of the elder dervishes who retained his gown walked slowly in and out of the whirling circles, and never once was touched, so far as I could see, either by a hand or skirt, though, it must be remembered, he was walking among dancers who were turning on their own axes, and, at the same time, following a definite course. Anyone who has had to thread his way through a ball-room will realise what this means. Occasionally, this dervish spoke in a low voice to one of the dancers; but why, I do not know. After about fifteen minutes, the harsh wooden clapper sounded again, the dance ceased, and the procession recommenced, each dervish being blessed by the Chelebi. Again the dance was renewed, and again it broke off, to be renewed a third time. After the third, the dervishes formed in a long line and bowed their heads to the earth, and the elder dervish who had walked among them during the dance covered them with their gowns. Facing them stood one of the chanters, who recited a long prayer in Arabic, calling down a blessing on the Sultan, praying for victors for the Ottoman arms. At the end, the Chelebi and his two colleagues came into the centre. The dervishes rose

and, all bowing profoundly, uttered in unison, and at great length, the words "Ya Hu!"

So the *zikr* ended—perfect, sincere, spontaneous, complete—the result of years of training, profound belief, and rigid discipline. Anyone who has seen the *zikr* on Friday at Konia can understand the underlying idea of the Mevlevi School, and I think it would need a better pen than mine to explain it to one who had not. The Kadri and Rufai *zikrs* are violent strivings to liberate the spirit by mechanical means, the Mevlevi *zikr* is a similar endeavour on different lines. There is one point which I think of the very highest importance, and that is that one should never confound any dervish *zikr* as being in the least similar, either in intention or feeling or effect, with the externally similar demonstrations which take place in Europe under the influence of preachers or revivalists. There is no such feeling as that of repentance, no personal experiences, no desire to confess dreadful and sometimes imaginary crimes, no sudden sensation of being "saved," accompanied by singing and the shouting out of exclamations such as "Go it!" "Hallelujah!" and "That's true!" Dervish *zikrs* of all kinds are entirely rationalistic and avowedly mechanical. They endeavour to reach a condition of one-ness with God, or a realisation of the nature of God. It is very difficult for a modern European Christian to understand this kind of thing, since it has practically nothing to do with mundane affairs or even good or evil, as we understand it. The children and sick are brought to be blessed by dervishes during a *zikr*, because the potent influence of God believed, for the moment, to be infused into the dervish, may be transmitted with good effect to the innocent or the diseased.

It is a very superficial mistake, therefore, to compare the difference between dervish *zikrs* as opposed to the simple formulæ of the mosque with the difference between extreme Evangelical and ceremonial forms of Christianity, or to imagine that the somewhat visible resemblance in outward excitement between dervish ecstasy and Revivalist enthusiasm has anything in common. The cry of the Revivalist has nothing to do with the cry of the swooning Rufai: "Aman! Aman!"—*i.e.* "Mercy! Mercy!"—since the latter expression really means "Mercy!

The vision is too unbearably great!" while the Revivalist expressions are those of ordinary human feeling intensified.

After the *zikr* was over, the Chelebi received me in his little pavilion. He was a most delightful and charming person, very deeply read, with a great fund of knowledge of the world, both old and new, which was to me very extraordinary, since he was quite as much at home with Borgian popes and English kings as he was with obscure Eastern dynasties. It was, to me, very exasperating to think that a man of such value and erudition should have less practical influence or position in this unhappy Empire than some brain-clogged, dissipated, atheist schoolmaster or an unshaven, slouching, pallid subaltern; but this side of the great swindle of representative government, with its excluded merit and its dingy, incompetent, greedy mediocrities who masquerade as the salt of the earth, is not peculiar to modern Turkey.

Konia being destitute of all animals, I was bidden proceed to Karaman in search thereof. Karaman is a feverish hole with some crumbling ruins of a vanished greatness and a depôt of self-binding reapers, with the help of which sanguine persons hope to re-establish its former glories at a handsome profit to themselves. Karaman was as destitute of horse-flesh as Konia, and the only way I could get over the mountains towards Ermenek was to hire cab-horses for myself and servants and camels for the luggage. To ride a cab-horse which has relied upon shafts for support and guidance, or to lead camels over a mountain pass, are both tedious occupations. Moreover, we were accompanied by gendarmes of the new régime; for, since intellect has taken command in Turkey, the *zaptieh* has gone the way of all flesh and the gendarme has come in his stead. Instead of the grizzly, ragged, grumbling old ruffian who knew every village, high-road, by-road, robber, bridge, ford, and ferry, we have now German-drilled young men in blue spat putties, and smart caps, who agree with everything, always say "Yes," and stand open-mouthed half an hour's ride outside the town, are comfortably helpless on all occasions, and can only either stand smartly to attention or scream in mincing Stambulese at the gaping peasants who understand nothing they say. The first day two of these creatures led us partly astray, and the second

day they made five and a half hours' easy ride into twelve for the camels, who were almost slain with fatigue in the process.

Owing to the manœuvres of these imbeciles I reached Bujak Kishla at dark, minus my caravan, and was obliged to sleep out. I therefore sent into the village for the usual things, a cauldron of water, three loaves of bread, milk, and rugs. An hour later, with a great clatter, arrived the reply to my requisition in the shape of one of the most typical products of modern Turkey—a Teuto-Byzantine officer with a kind of khaki cocked hat invented by Enver Bey on his head, and a complete reach-me-down German uniform, yellow boots, gaiters, turned moustache, and jumpy voice. He hurled himself off his horse, stamped, saluted, and produced a tin felt-covered flask, holding half a pint of water, a slice of bread and a mackintosh, and saying, in Turkish, *à la Potsdam*—"Your orders received—water—bread—clothing—here—prepared—at—your—service." A lumbering Anatolian came shuffling up and mumbled something to the effect that he was the headman and that he had wanted to get something for us to eat, but that he had left it to the Captain Effendi. Whereupon the Captain Effendi, with a smile of scorn, flashed an electric light out of his pocket, stamped and saluted and repeated that he was at our service—as much as to say, "a nice mess this barbarian would have made of it." At this moment the caravan arrived, bringing a hopeless situation to a close. My point is that if the Captain Effendi had not been there, the headman would have brought out clean rugs in plenty, fried eggs, hot bread, honey, and, with luck, some tea; but the presence of one young Turk was sufficient to dislocate the customs of ages and put electric torches and tin flasks of dirty water in their place. Kirk Kilisse and Lule Burgas were but this on a grand scale.

At Bujak Kishla we parted with the camels and proceeded over a wonderful waste of mountain forest and precipices to a solitary ancient *khan* named Gilendi, where three families were encamped. These Yuruks, who outwardly seem to be ordinary Turkish villagers of particularly healthy appearance, have certain characteristics which are well worth observing. They are cheerful, manly, good-natured, simple people of

splendid physique, and very direct, honest manners. They answer questions truthfully and do not cringe. Their women are unveiled and their children are clean. Their tents—unlike those of the Kurds, Arabs, or Gypsies—are not pitched with pole and rope, but are stretched over loops of slender branches as those of the Turkomans of Central Asia to-day. The Yuruks are chiefly interesting since they represent pretty much, both in habits and in appearance, what the Ottoman Turks and Seljuks must have been when they first appeared in Asia Minor, before intermarriage with other races, government, religion, and taxation had exercised any permanent impression on them. The Yuruks live in such small communities that it is difficult to appreciate or realise what their special bent would be. They have chosen to remain free of the world, to tend flocks, weave carpets and keep camels; and, as the world has grown, so they have been forced to scatter further and further apart into the waste highlands. Certain things, though apparently trivial, tend to give one a little closer insight into their nature. For example, if you pitch your tents with Yuruks, and you get to be known in camp, the dogs will come up to you and allow you to pat them as if it were no extraordinary thing—which shows that Yuruks do not kick in the stomach every dog that comes within reach. Moreover, the Yuruks are very gentle and careful with their camels, and evidently have favourites, as I have seen camels with special ornaments and gay trappings and warm cloths standing among others that had only rough pack on their backs. Yuruk women look you straight in the face and answer questions without any demur. They look healthy and weather-beaten, and the young girls are sometimes quite pretty.

It is a strange thought that a similar race of simple, burly, natural creatures should have provided the original power which produced the Ottoman Empire and all its corruptions and horrors, old and new. I was loth to leave these good people the next morning to continue my road to Ermenek.

From Gilendi to Ermenek, the track runs first over a waste of stony ridges and then descends into a deep, sparsely-forested gorge, lined on either side with extraordinary cliffs and caves, which ends in a conjunction of valleys where there is a bridge

and a tiny house and some cultivated ground. Here we rested for lunch in the shade of some trees. Presently, there emerged from the house a thickset, athletic old man with a beard like a frosty hedgehog, piercing eyes and hooked nose. He was dressed in a red and yellow striped gown. On his head he wore a large, yellow turban, on his legs buff knee boots with scarlet, turn-over tops. In his hand he held three huge honey-combs white as snow. "Welcome, stranger, and welcome again," he said in a voice like a bassoon. "What you come for, I don't know. The government has robbed me of sons, horses and all. This honey is what I have left, so take it, and if you go to Ermenek, you'll find that the Osmanli government is all up—done for—broken up—and the sooner something else comes the better. Now, eat the honey while I wash my hands," and, having dumped down the combs on one of my plates, he skipped off to the river like a boy of twenty. What the old gentleman's particular trouble was I know not.

After another uninhabited expanse of rocks we reached Ermenek itself. Ermenek is one of those places which come as a surprise. I was riding over a stony ridge with a suspicious feeling that I was still some hours from my destination and that I should not reach Ermenek until nightfall, when suddenly I came to a rift in the skyline and found, to my amazement, that an immense, cultivated, wooded valley, some 2,000 feet deep and some two miles broad, lay at my feet, while Ermenek itself stretched in steps and terraces between me and the lands below. After three days of scattered pines and waterless wastes and grey mountains, this sudden burst of brilliant greens, colour, red earth, and cultivation was grateful to the eye.

At Ermenek I was received as a Prince of the Blood. The whole staff, from the mayor and the governor to the telegraph clerk, was drawn up for my reception; a large house was set apart for me; horses, grapes, apples, cream, butter, pomegranates and cheeses were pressed upon me. Here I was back in the Turkey of my youth. Ermenek is rich. There are no railways to take away the grain and send up the prices, and there is abundance of everything that makes glad the heart of man. The people are well-dressed, the shopmen are busy and wealthy, weaving, shoemaking, and tailoring; strings of stout asses and

mules creep up to market from the valley below, laden with fruit and produce. There are work and ease for all. The war has carried off the young men; but even in this year of misery Ermenek is a happy town. I have no wish to labour this point, but I cannot deny the evidence of my eyes, and I know that if Ermenek were on the railway, there would be drink, noise, poverty and dirt, flotsam and jetsam from the Mediterranean littoral, cadging and scavenging and corrupting. European speculators make good the bribes they have spent in gaining concessions by squeezing the birthright of the peasants out of their very hands. Surely there is a big account which European civilisation will have to settle some day. To me it is a bitter thought that, sooner or later, these people will all be dressed in dingy clothes, all driven into mines and factories, all have to go into the ridiculous mill which begins with Manchester selfishness and struggle, passes through the stage of strife, and ends in utilitarian prosperity, where art, philosophy, and nature are no more.

Still, Ermenek is a very nice place in which to spend a couple of days, and its rocky fortresses and barriers may save its pleasantness for many a year. These same hills harboured Pompey's pirates and the fugitive Zeno; and they still will serve a turn. The Kaimakam, who was one of the pleasantest hosts, devised a most profitable morning's amusement for me. He said that a tomb had recently been found in the back of a cellar of a private house and that it had been walled up, but that, in my honour, it should be opened again. Accordingly, the Kaimakam, the mayor, the principal citizens, the police, and a herd of children assembled at an appointed hour armed with two petroleum lamps. We were led into a stable and thence to a cellar, and thence to a hole in the ground. What was my joy when I found myself in a room hollowed in the big rock, about twelve feet square, in which stood three arched niches containing three great sarcophagi, each surmounted by a lion of heroic size engaged in holding an ibex in its right paw, while its head was raised in pride, its mouth open, and its tongue dangling on its breast. The sarcophagi contained, I understand, eight skeletons apiece. The skulls from the central one I photographed and replaced in their proper sarcophagus. Having taken flashlight

To face p. 533

# Route Between Karaman and Kiz Kale
(Note BOYALAR is about 8 miles S. of Karaman.)

0 5 10 15 20 MILES

33° 33° 30′ 34°

37° 36° 30′

BOYALAR
Kiratli Yaila
Gok Su
Yumri Tepe
Bujaki Hane
Aza Tepe
Gilendi Hane
Yelli D.
Balkesan Dere
ERMENEK
Hissar D.
AIKADIN BOGHAZ
Boz D.
Dekechati Su
Dermenlik Mill
Gok Su
Koja Kalessi
Da Bazar
Conspicuous Rock
Mut
Junction 2 hours from Mut.
KURU DERE
Tchormelek
HUJA
Chakal D.
Stony track
MARA
METAL ROAD
Rocky Maze. For approximate detail, see larger scale map.
URA
Aladam
Dart on rock
Village & school
Grotto
KIZ KALEH
MEDITN. SEA

1. DERMEN BOGHAZ
2. Artificial lake 20 years old
3. Tower
4. Theatre
5. Temple
6. Gate
7. Temple Tower
8. First buildings of Old Town
9. Aqueduct
10. Guard Houses
11. Great Cave
12. do. do.
13. Castle } Kariadi Kalissi
14. Castle }
15. Ruin and Gates to Pass
16. Gorge to Kiz Kale
17. GENETI OBURU

A. MELISSTEPE
B. TSHIFLIK
C. VILLAGE (name unknown)
D. DEKECHATI KUPRI
E. TOZLU
N.B. Cliffs full of Beehives
F. DERMENLIK MILL
G. BASH KHOSH
H. JUMMA BAZAR (Great broken column)
J. YURUK (Camp)
K. JIBBI
L. DORLA
M. KALE PUNAR MONASTERY
N. HOJANT (Mill)
O. MAGHLIA
P. ALAHAN
Q. KOJA KALESSI
R. CHIVI
S. YENI-SU
T. ELEXI-SU
U. KIZIL OVA (Rocky Plateau)
V. HAJJI AHMET YAILASI
W-W. GEUDEN DERE
X. TCHORMELEK
Y. .. ditto .... KUPRI
Z. ESKI KAVAK

Impassable beds of jagged rocks with pines growing in interstices.

London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd.

Stanford's Geogl. Estabt., London.

photographs, drawings, and measurements, I withdrew, awaiting the judgment of the learned on the monument.

My departure from Ermenek was as impressive as my arrival. The Kaimakam and the mayor and the council, the officer with the tin water-bottle, the children, two idiots, five beggars and some cripples were paraded in the public square, and a thousand thanks and apologies were mutually showered upon myself and the company. Amongst those present was my old friend of the honeycombs who, it turned out, had invested some money in a fraudulent company—hence his wrath against the impotence of the government, who, he considered, should have covered his risks.

Our way lay through a wondrous wild country of strange gorges which no photograph can adequately describe. The bright yellows and deep blue-greys get lost in the camera, and the fantastic shapes dwindle to insignificance in the flat-lying perspective of the film. Even a person of no imagination would find it impossible not to conjure up nightmares in these ravines. One seems to see strange herds of petrified monsters, great cathedrals, frowning castles, grinning skulls of giants, huge writhing reptiles, all jumbled together and dissolving and re-shaping at every turn of the pass. How pleasant it is to be absolutely ignorant of geology, and to know none of the dull and possibly untruthful reasons why these things are so formed! I rode through these wonderful clefts in the earth accompanied by a philosophic muleteer. He had avoided military service by taking a theological degree at Konia, and his views on current affairs were so profound as to be worth chronicling:—

"Many men have gone from Ermenek to the war. Luckily the war was lost before the Ermenek men got to it. Now, if the war had opened with victory, they would have had to go fighting and getting killed a long way from Constantinople. As it was, they lived at Chatalja, and then went peacefully to Adrianople, and now, glory be to God! are coming home. The soldiers write home and say they are well; but nothing else, because they do not know where they are or what they are doing. The Ottoman government is in a bad way, and whatever one sets up, another pulls down. It is not for me to say who" [*Aside to the mule*, "Get on, you faithless, shameless beast"] "sets up or who pulls

down. We are poor people—very stupid people and know nothing. We do not have anything to do with government. Vote? Oh, no! We do not vote—that is for the officials and doctors and dentists. We only pay taxes."

On our arrival at Dermenlik, we found a Yuruk tribe getting ready to move. They are not such rapid packers as the Bedawin. A whole day or more is spent in getting ready, and the night before the start all hands sleep on the luggage.

These infernal reforms again landed me with two blue-coated simpletons who could not tell me, even approximately, where we were or how we were to get anywhere; and as Kiepert's map is too truthful to invent information, I had to go to bed wondering how we should set our course to-morrow.

. . . . .

Two days have passed since last I wrote. Two days of wrath and toil and some compensation.

The morning after we reached Dermenlik, two of the muleteers announced that they could guide us to Khoja Kalessi, the great monastery described by Mr. Hogarth and Sir W. M. Ramsay. (Murray is explicit as regards the name; I lay stress upon this point.) Well, the two muleteers knew two different ways. The one who knew the worst way took charge of me; the other (my philosophic friend), of the caravan. I and the lunch bag rolled down ravines and crawled up gorges for some hours, and presently were overtaken by the baggage on a hilltop. The philosopher looked at my streaming face and torn clothes, and then politely lay down on his face and literally yelled with laughter. When he had recovered, we set off again, and, after a long series of twists, turns, ascents and descents, arrived not at Khoja Kalessi, but a village called Dorla. I was here informed that there was no such place as Khoja Kalessi, but there was a village called Hojanti where there was a mill. The philosopher suggested obtaining information, and the village elders were summoned. These were fairly intelligent, and explained that Hojanti was a place on the Gök Su where there was a bridge, that up in the mountains there was a great monastery called Alahan Monastir, and that twenty-three years ago people with hats on had come and made plans (evidently Mr. Hogarth and Professor, now Sir W. M., Ramsay). They informed me that there was a

monastery on the Maras Dagh, close at hand, which nobody in a hat was known to have seen. Furthermore, I was told that the village of Hojanti was pestiferous and no place to sleep in, that the village of Maghlia, a healthy place, was but two hours' ride further on, and near the Alahan Monastery. The strategy and tactics were simple. I was to go to the Maras Dagh Monastery, the caravan to Maghlia, where I should turn up later in the day. Just as these excellent plans had been made, the village khoja, a dark-skinned, sleek cleric, in spotless linen and sky-blue cloak, arrived—one of the most conceited idiots I ever met.

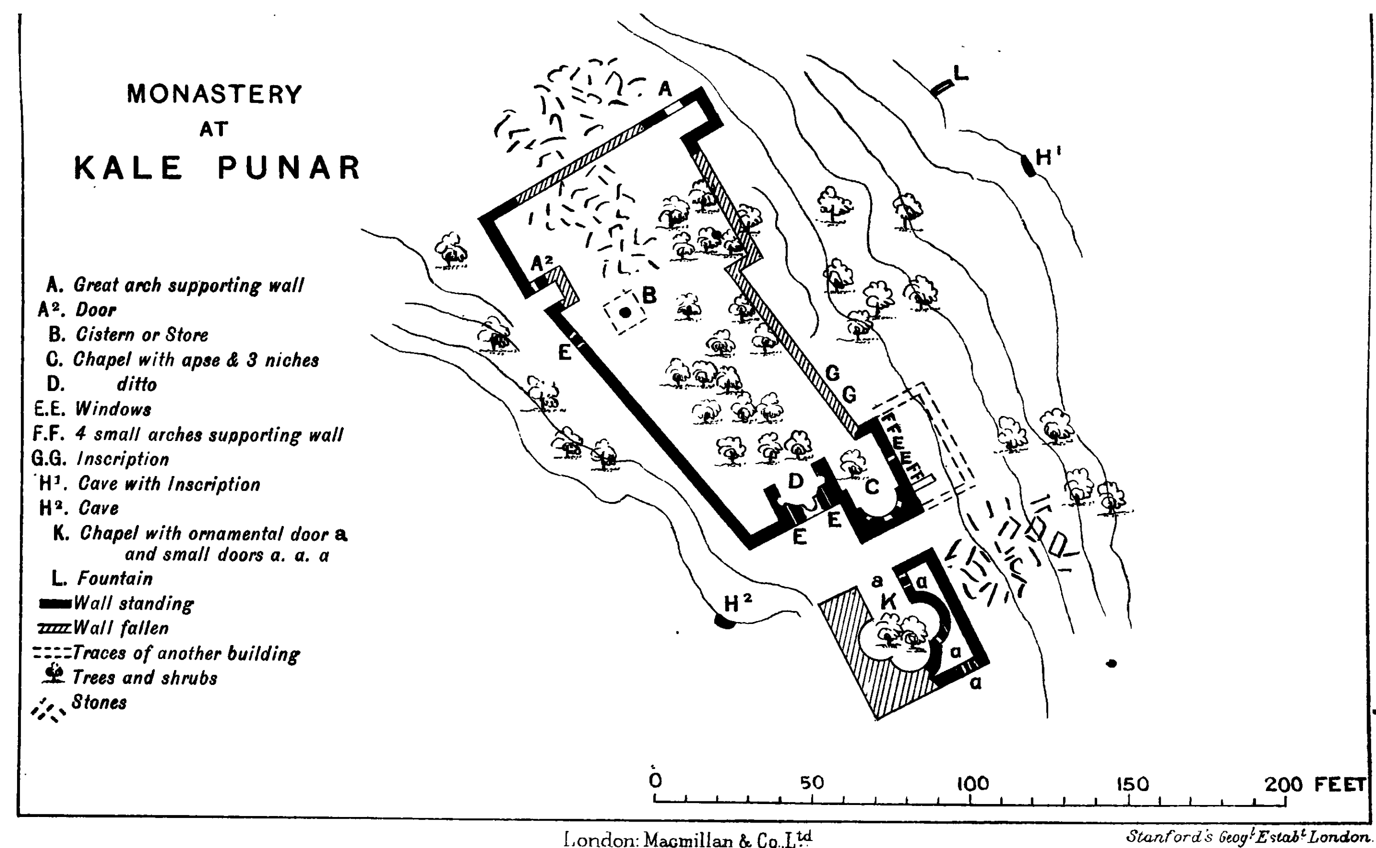
"Welcome—ah, it's lucky for you I was here. I might have been away on business. Here, Ahmed, go and get eggs for His Excellency. Hassan, fetch honey. Ismail, fetch chickens.[1] These ignorant villagers are like animals. Pray accept my excuses. I am learned. I spent five years in Cairo and four in Baghdad. I am very learned. I speak Arabic, the language of the Book. Now, what do you wish—the monasteries? I have learned the whole of the histories of the monasteries. One was built by Sidi Batal, one by Karaman, and one by Seljuk. I will make your plans. I will accompany you to the monasteries and explain everything. You must sleep at Hojanti. Fever? No, that is untrue! Fevers come from God. I have learned that if a man is destined to get fever he must get fever. The water of Hojanti is exceedingly light and masculine. There are no mosquitoes because I have learned that mosquitoes do not exist after the month that is past. Now, I am going to Hojanti to-morrow to fetch a sack of flour. I will accompany you to Hojanti. You shall sleep there. I will then take you to the Alahan Monastery and explain its history. The Maras Dagh Monastery? There is no monastery on the Maras Dagh. This man is a fool. O! well, of course if you call that a monastery." I interrupted at this moment with a fit of sudden illness, bade my servant fill the khoja with coffee, sugar and tea, and fled to my own tent.

The next morning, the khoja was up before me and pestering everyone with his knowledge and advice. He also made me a present of a basket of rotten eggs, one of which exploded in the cook's hand. "Thy gift in thy beard, O chilly witted Owl,"

[1] None of these commodities existed in the village, and the khoja knew it.

murmured Jacob, as he proceeded to the kitchen. At last I escaped with the village elder, saw the caravan packed off, and started up the Maras Dagh. For one hour and three-quarters we ascended on our ponies, and then had to abandon them and crawl. I suppose that crawling through a forest growing on a gradient of one foot to five inches, with boulders that fall and branches that fail to support, is child's play to a mountaineer. To me it is painful and terrifying, and it went on for three-quarters of an hour, excluding such times as I lay down on a ledge and panted. Well, all things end and so did that horrible ascent; and there, hidden in brushwood, I trust concealed from all European eyes but mine, lay the monastery of grey stone. Some people may like moufflon, and others ibex, but give me a monastery; the only objection to monasteries is that you never know whether they have not been bagged by someone else. Anyhow, unless you sleep at Dorla, you are not likely to hear of this one; and as far as I know, there is no place whence it can be distinguished from the rocks and shrubs except by a person who previously knows of its existence. This monastery contains two apses—a granary or cistern—and has, outside it, a very pretty little cruciform chapel. The interior is so overgrown with shrubs and trees that nothing short of felling operations would permit of a regular survey of the interior.

There is very little ornamental work except a few fallen stone lintels, and one very brief inscription. The mapping of the outer walls and chapel occupied some three hours of hard work, at the end of which the village elder said we must be off if we would reach Maghlia by dark. So, away down to the horses and then by the wildest toboggan of a road some three thousand feet to the banks of the Gök Su. Here we met folk with yellow faces and projecting stomachs, betiding chronic malaria. Dense, rank vegetation grew around stagnant water and flowing streams, and there were thousands of winged insects. "Thank heaven!" thought I, "the wise village elder arranged for us to sleep at Maghlia." A few moments later in the very midst of this filthy jungle, I came upon my tents neatly pitched and the khoja sitting in the middle of them. "Welcome! welcome! I said you should sleep at Hojanti. These foolish people would have taken you up to Maghlia!



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I stopped them and obliged them to pitch your tents here. I will sit with you and explain to you how I learned wisdom in Baghdad."

On some occasions I am a person of next to no self-control at all. Yet, though I said nothing, so strange a look must have come into my eyes that the words froze upon the khoja's lips, and he turned and fled. Then came a scene of woe and lamentations, recriminations and wrath. The tents were pitched, dinner was half-cooked, the sun was setting. No one knew where water was. I take to myself the whole credit of moving the camp to another place: for the sake of other travellers I will explain how I did it—I got on my horse and rode along, bidding the muleteers pack and follow. By eight o'clock we were settled down 600 feet above the mosquitoes and the yellow-faced villagers. The next day a moderate climb to Maghlia, and thence to Alahan, a fountain and a ruined khan, where I met khaki-clad soldiers back from the war. They had not seen any fighting and had formed part of the Constantinople garrison. They were very cock-a-hoop, and had evidently been well "stuffed" by their officers. "All officers not belonging to the Committee had been in the pay of the Bulgarians. When Enver's friends shot Nazim, they did a great act of courage; and when all the people were hanged after Mahmud Shevket's murder, the way was made straight. The army could have marched to Sofia or Vienna. What a pity the war was over"; and so forth and so on. These three fellows were well-dressed and sleek, and evidently had had no more training during their twelve months of active service than any other Turkish troops get. From their talk, it was easy to see the way they were managed, and, from their insolent sneaking manners, easy to understand how deep the Committee ideas have sunk into some of the rank and file. Thence to Alahan Monastir—at least the few Yuruks and people I met told me that that is the name they give the great monastery which Mr. Hogarth and Murray's Guide write down Khoja Kalessi. However, there is no discredit in calling it anything else, as I have no doubt it has, like most of the landmarks in these parts, half a dozen names, none of which anyone except the inventor knows.

The monastery is, I understand, a splendid example of fifth

century architecture—that is, the last gasp of classicism and the first dawn of Byzantine. It is a style which architects would do well to study and which is susceptible of much development; it lends itself to modern construction in many ways—the apse, the dome, the depressed arch, the square or round door or window—and affords a great opportunity for freedom and originality. When one looks at this monastery, with its large stately chapel, colonnade, ante-rooms, courts and chambers, perched in this inaccessible spot, in a district that by the very nature of things must ever have been sparsely populated, one is much tempted to wonder what was the real position of the church when it was built, and the temper of the people who inhabited it.

Personally, I cannot quite visualise the picture, for no Eastern or Western ecclesiastics I know quite fit in with the surroundings. Was this lonely palace the abode of wild, ragged hermits, or hair-splitting students, or philosophers, or disgraced officials? It is a long way back to the four hundreds. Paganism was not wholly dead, and the Roman Empire was still a reality. This monastery betokens, by its massive shape, wealth, the control of power and energy; and, by its situation, insists that all worldly matters are things of no consideration. What was the life of its inmates? What were the holy offices in the chapel? What did people in the markets of Laronda think about? I believe that research and reading can hardly tell us all the tale, and that the great monastery on the lonely deserted mountains will long hold some secrets from us.

We proceeded up the mountain and camped in the forest, and then, next day, sorely against my will to Da Bazar, whither the guides said they were not taking us, but over an unknown path to Mara. The rogues betrayed me. Lulled by false promises I went on busily making my road sketches until I suddenly spied a village where no village should have been.

"What's that?—Da Bazar?"

"Yes."

"Well, why the . . . . didn't you say we were not going there?"

"We meant you could go round the village without going into it."

"O ! false, perjured sons of shameless persons, did you not say you were going to take me four hours to the south ?"

"Not four hours to the south, but that you could camp four hours west or north if you wished."

My only revenge was to ride on until the betrayers were very weary, when we halted at Chivi for the night.

From Chivi we pushed on to Cheumelik, over a wild, rugged expanse of rocks and trees, waterless forest, deserted and empty—a strange solitude, a kind of moon landscape: grey stones, black shadows, deep ravines, no herbage and these stiff, unearthly, twisted pines. Some three hours of this, and so down to the tents of the Hajji Ahmedli Yuruks. The Yuruks are not very communicative, and I defy the whole of the British Bar to go to Anatolia and find something out about these people. This is the sort of thing :—

Q. "Why do your tents have three white rings painted on the left-hand side ?"

A. "It is an ornament."

Q. "Does it mean anything ?"

A. "No, it is an ornament."

Q. "But do other tribes but yours have them ?"

A. "We do not know—some have one thing, some another."

Q. "Well, have you ever seen any other tribe with three white rings ?"

A. "We cannot remember."

Q. "Where do you come from ?"

A. "Here."

Q. "But where was your tribe before it came here ?"

A. "Here."

Q. "But have you no stories of how you came here ?"

A. "There was an old man who died here twenty years ago ; he was so old all his teeth fell out and some new ones—little ones—came in his mouth, and he said he had always been here."

Q. "Have you any head, or chief, or rais, or Shaykh, or Agha in your tribe ?"

A. "No."

Q. "But had you never any person greater that anyone else in the tribe ?"

A. "No."

Q. "Who is your head?"

A. "The headman."

Q. "Is it in the family?"

A. "No—we choose the person most likely to suit."

Q. "But how do you arrange about moving?"

A. "When we are come together and it is about time, we decide upon a day and we move."

Q. "Are you the same as Turkomans?"

A. "No, we are Yuruks."

Q. (hopefully) "What is the difference between Yuruks and Turkomans?"

A. "There is no difference."

Q. "Then how can you tell a Yuruk from a Turkoman?"

A. "Yuruks are Yuruks and Turkomans are Turkomans."

Q. "Do you only marry among yourselves?"

A. "No, we marry villagers or Turkomans, and they marry our women as it is arranged."

This useless and irritating information was given me by a beaming, healthy, rosy giant, who had the profile of a conqueror and might have sat for a portrait of Sulaiman the Magnificent. Yet these were his futile opinions.

From Cheumelik we went on to Mara through a number of villages where the women do not veil or even get out of one's way. My gendarme, an elderly Armenian, a survivor of Hamidian days, told me that, since the constitution, his life had been a burden to him, as he and a few old men had all the work to do because the new gendarmes could only salute and say "Evvet Effendim." The most common offence, according to this minion of the law, was the abduction of Moslem girls by Moslem men. "The way it happens is this. A young man with no money asks a man to give him his daughter and the man refuses. Then the young man hangs about and lies in wait and carries her off to the mountains. Then I am sent to catch him, and, after a time, I bring him back and they write on papers and put him in prison, and, after he has been in prison two months, the girl arrives and says he is her husband and that she begged him to carry her off and that her father beats her, and, for fear of beating, she said she was forced

and carried off. But who can believe or know what is true between young men and girls?" Which simple story I commend to the members of the W.S.P.U. as a restful tale without a moral of any kind whatever.

At Mara I was received with some excitement because some foreign gentleman had announced his intention of flying over the Taurus, all villagers being warned not to be either alarmed or enraged at the appearance of an aeroplane, and it was supposed that I was the flying man's herald or valet or bed-maker or doctor.

Mara is a small town of Armenian and Greek merchants. The Greek priest and the greater notables called upon me and complained of things in general. The chief sufferer with whom I was asked to sympathise was a Greek money-lender who had sued a number of people without success. I was also ordered to give money to the Greek church and school. The mudir was one of those odd specimens of humanity who make the Ottoman Empire, past and present, more and more incomprehensible. He was a well-educated, well-dressed, clean, smart brisk man of thirty-five; the son of a very wealthy Pasha, he had travelled all over the Empire, and had even been to Bombay and Egypt. He had been three years as headman of this miserable hole of fifty houses, was regularly snowed up from December until April, never saw anyone but the policeman and the Greek priest, yet was apparently perfectly happy.

From Mara to the ruins of Uzunji Burji the road led through an incredible maze of forest and rocks. All along the way we passed Yuruks moving south. The Yuruk method of travelling consists of an advance guard of children on donkeys, followed by men and women on foot, and these by camels on whose backs are conveyed the sick, the aged, chickens and cats. Alongside the camels trip the dogs and baby camels. Yuruk women keep themselves busy on the march. I observed one with a baby slung on to her back, driving a donkey with her voice and feet; a camel's leading string was slipped in her girdle, while with her hands she was running a wooden spindle.

For an hour and a half before one reaches Uzunji Burji, the route follows an ancient road which threads in and out of the wild and tortuous series of chasms by which the place is sur-

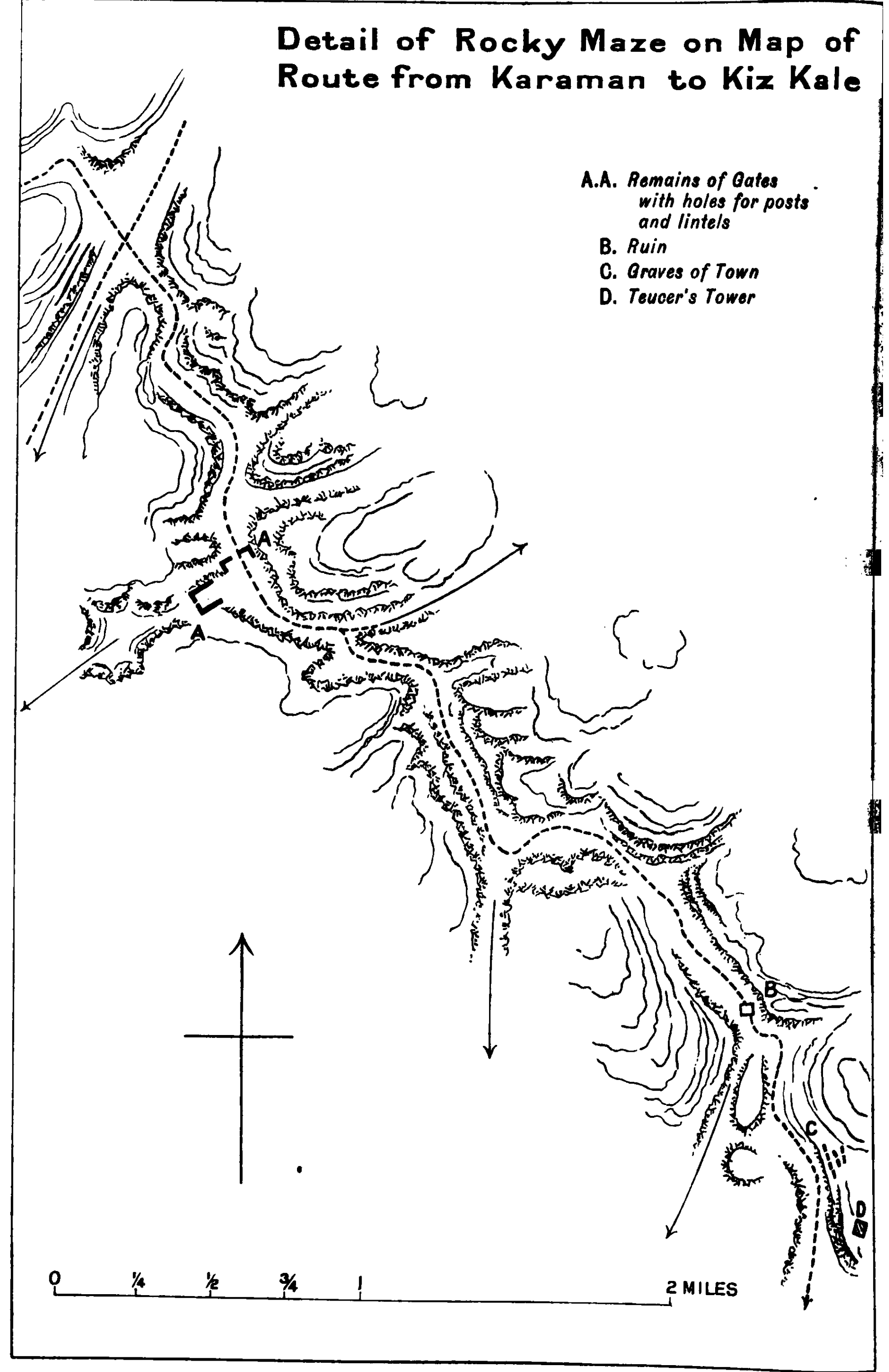
rounded. About a quarter of the way through these passes one comes to a blank wall of rock which is pierced by a cutting. In the cutting are sockets for door posts. On getting through the cutting, one finds oneself in a little amphitheatre; on one's left is another cutting with a similar gate; while the road to the city leads south. On a cursory examination, it looks as though all communication from the north might, in ancient times, have been cut off by closing these two gates. At least, my guides tell me that this is the only possible way into Uzunji Burji from Mara.

Uzunji Burji itself is too overgrown with trees and shrubs to enable one to form a just impression of what the city is like. The great Gateway, the Tower of Tenar, the Tower Temple, the vestige of the colonnade, are remarkable enough to reward any traveller for his pains, but a well-equipped expedition might spend a spring and summer in excavating and bringing to light many wonderful treasures. By all accounts, no one has been here since Miss Bell visited the place six years ago. She will learn with mixed feelings that she was described as a beautiful German lady.

I had the good fortune to be shown a most beautiful, colossal marble statue of a man. The statue erect would have stood some ten feet high. The head was missing, but the tunic, legs, cloak and armour were in perfect preservation. The statue must have been similar to the one of Augustus, as the children and young men had already begun to smash it to pieces. It had only been found about two years ago. So, having photographed it, I had it buried at the cost of one *mejidieh*, and warned the village that it had been photographed and that, sooner or later, men of the government would come, and, if it were in the least different from its photograph, taxes would be doubled, houses burned, and general trouble. I await the applause of the civilised world.

The next day we reached Ura, where the old city of the Cilician pirates lies in ruins, and from thence down a gorge, which is not marked on the map, save in dotted lines. It is another of these strange chinks in the earth, bending, twisting and turning in the most exasperating manner if one happens to be trying to sketch it. All along this deep cut runs an ancient

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road of wonderful solidity. The gradients which this old road takes are so steep and the surface, where it remains intact, so smooth, that one is led to wonder what was the kind of traffic that went along it. Pack animals and stirrupless riding horses, litters and rough, springless wagons would fare as well, if not better, on a much less elaborate construction; and, as for marching troops, one could hardly select anything less suitable than a smooth, slippery pavement. On either side of the chasm are innumerable tombs, and, at one point, considerable remains of buildings and forts of hewn stones which I have marked on the map.

The passage of the gorge occupied about two hours. Thereafter, we emerged on to a rough, rolling plateau about ten miles in breadth, which divides Cilicia from the sea. This glacier-like slope is itself an extraordinarily difficult piece of country to cross; rocky, overgrown with brushwood and intersected with terrible paths—ruins, ruins, ruins, on every hand. Every sign of wild life—wild fruit trees, wild olive, wild grapes—tells the tale of desolation and abandonment more clearly than anything else; yet only long custom and tradition and some underlying cause can have held this land to wealth and prosperity. It is more stony than any ordinary man, beginning to farm now, can cope with; so waterless that only aqueducts and cisterns made ancient life possible; so rocky and tortuous that two miles an hour is an incredible speed. Yet on this highland, first pirates, then Roman citizens, then rich Christians flourished. It is, I think, quite hopeless to expect this waste to blossom again within the life of living men. Its past development must have been as slow as its collapse. Its future is not of any immediate promise.

So to Alacham, a Yuruk camp, for the night; and thence to the grotto of Geniti Oburu.

On the way we passed the remains of two large towns, one at Kavakly, the other at Hassan Aliler. At the latter there are the very perfect remains of a basilica, only one wall of which has fallen. I took especial pains to photograph this building, since there is no trace of it on Kiepert's map.

The grotto of Geniti Oburu is a very remarkable feature. A chasm some 600 yards long, 200 broad and 300 feet deep serves as the entrance to a cave of almost equal proportions. In the

very mouth of the cave stands a perfect chapel with some traces of frescoes in the apse. At the further end of the cave is a spouting fountain of great volume, the water from which rushes with a noisy rumbling into a hole leading apparently into the bowels of the earth. The Yuruks who showed me this extraordinary place had no story or explanation to give. It was called Heaven and God knew why, was all they had to say.

Thence out into the air and up into the ordinary haunts of men, and a mile due south on to the most ruinous chaussée, and, in an hour, along this to Kyz Kalé—a great fortress which served from the time when men had time and brains to build round arches of enormous strength, cornices of massive beauty and columns of divine proportion, down to the day when some sea-captain of Mohammed Ali's pierced the tottering walls for guns and held the place against such fragments of the Turkish fleets as had escaped Navarino. Kyz Kalé has upon it the handiwork of every age, pirate, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Armenian, Crusader, Karamian, Venetian and Ottoman. Strolling among the ruins, I picked up a Roman soldier's bootnail of bronze and a piece of Rhodian glaze. Such places would be worth excavating and perhaps yield more various troves than many tombs and temples. Kyz Kalé is a fine example of mediaeval military architecture—a great castle on the shore with a watergate and strong breakwater which runs out towards an island ; on this stands a great bastioned fort which itself shows signs of another breakwater cutting across the bay, and so forming a circle of water defended both against man and weather. With a library of some few hundred volumes and a few years of leisure one might profitably muse and moralise on the vicissitudes of these remains. One night is not sufficient ; and mosquitoes and yellow-faced Yuruks who complain of heavy waters and foul airs are apt to disturb one's peace of mind.

The Yuruks have a legend about Kyz Kalé. It is the only gleam of any interest or invention I have yet heard of among these amiable but uncommunicative people. There was once a King, and he had a daughter. One night the King dreamt that his daughter was bitten by a serpent, so he built Kyz Kalé and kept her in it until she died. The tale is not without its moral

if it be properly considered, and the moral might be applied to nursing homes and hydropathic establishments.

One little episode I mention for the benefit of travellers. At dawn the sea is tempting and I bathed at Kyz Kalé. Encouraged by my example, my Greek cook, Constantine, followed suit, and, being a lusty swimmer, took a turn round the bay while I was drying myself on the hill side. Just as Constantine returned to the beach, I thought I noticed something move by the ruined breakwater. I took up my glass and spotted the cruel dorsal fins of two large sharks who had evidently expected Constantine to make a second course round the bay.

Doubled up in a creaking carriage, which I got from Selefki, I travelled from Kyz Kalé towards Mersina, through long stretches of ruined cities and crumbling towers and broken aqueducts. This is a vile pestilential coast in summer and autumn, and I looked longingly at the cool, wholesome hills I had left in my haste. At five o'clock the horses could go no further, and we had to stop in a swamp. Clouds of mosquitoes swarmed up around us—fens and stagnant pools and tufts of rushes surrounded us, and only a shepherd, with a swollen spleen and a face of jaundiced death, was there to tell us that there was nowhere we could go. In despair, I made for the beach and found some reed huts and a few fisher folk who looked a little less unwholesome than the shepherd. Here the sea breeze kept the mosquitoes off a little; but from the beach there issued swarms of fleas and sand flies even more vexatious, if less fatal, than the insects of the swamp. Here we camped and were only a little cheered by the production of a real tunny fish, freshly caught and of large proportions. Fresh tunny is a delicacy, but I can assure all gourmets that it is not worth sleeping in a swamp and risking malignant malaria to obtain.

It was after a troubled night that I awoke at dawn to see the most wonderful sight: a fiery, bloody flush suffused the Eastern horizon in a long, low, narrow band. This sharp line was broken by two dark silhouettes of the Syrian peaks one hundred miles away. This broken band of red separated a purple, starlit sky, wherein, just without the verge of red,

there lay a waving crescent from an incredible stripe of violet copper-green, rippling in long, hard lines, breaking in restless, razor-edged waves upon a third stripe of chocolate beach. This singular glory—or shall I say manifestation, for it had in it something of terror and ill-omen, something beyond nature?—lasted not above fifteen minutes.

The wretched carriage crawled on next day to Mersina, where Arabian influence begins to make itself felt. Mersina is a wretched hole, Greek in its squalor, Armenian in its ugliness, Turkish in its ruinousness, Arab in its noisiness. It is a town of some trade, however; and unlike happy, healthy Ermenek, people make a little money here and lose their appetites and complexion in the getting of it.

At Mersina, the British railway has become German, and, on paper, German influence is greatly increasing. But, in effect, what is this railway? It has every symptom and sign of being a Panama of the biggest and most scrambling description—immense, expensive, absurd stations destined for picture post-cards, erected at immense expense; iron sleepers made in Germany for a railway that passes through miles of opulent forest; an ill-laid track that makes life a burden; trains that purposely fail to coincide in order to realise some pettifogging policy of favouring Alexandretta at the expense of Mersina; lines laid alongside already existing lines in order to extort a petty kilometric guarantee out of a bankrupt, starving country; millions spent in piercing tunnels through mountains in order to cross deserts and avoid the rich littoral. A thousand villainies and follies culminate in this railway: all business is eschewed; all attempt at development neglected; the only profits being those on contracts for unnecessary expenses, and on purposely extended mileage. Is this the policy of a great Empire, or is it merely the tortuous working of a contemptible group of cosmopolitan financiers? Whatever it be, Germans and Germany are hated in the plain of Adana, simply for the reason that no illiterate peasant can fail to understand that the whole thing is a fraudulent farce from the pompous railway station to the trains that go from nowhere to nowhere, and not because of any personal dislike for Germans, since, of all people, Germans seem the most keen on avoiding the Baghdad Railway, where Jews, Greeks,

Armenians, Italians, French, swarm in every office, but Germans never. My personal belief is that some day there will be a crisis, a collapse and an explosion which will startle the world. Adana may have doffed its sackcloth, but it still sits in ashes. The Armenian question hangs heavily in the air, and the Moslems of the city are blackguards of all nations—Afghans, Indians, blacks, Egyptians, Turkish riff-raff, outcast Kurds, the very stuff to serve in a massacre.

Adana is rich, unwholesome and rascally. It is a town of fevers, panic and dust, a place from which I fled with joy to Osmaniyeh, another wretched sickly place, where, to my great content, I found beasts and men ready to take me to the mountains. So the next day we made off to the hills. Oh, the relief to breathe good air, and oh! the glory of sudden autumn in the Anti-Taurus—up 3,000 feet to great mountains of yellows, orange and lemon greens, dark and pale reds, scarlet and brown, of shadows and lights changing from hour to hour. These mountains are happy in perennial streams, so the way is not painful for man or beast.

One night was spent at Karatash, and then two hours took us to Yarpuz. In the days of Abdul Hamid, Yarpuz was rich with a great school, a serai, a bazaar and many houses, the seat of the mutesarrif and a half battalion o soldiers. The new régime and the railway demanded the removal of these things to Osmaniyeh. Yarpuz is a ruin as dismal as you may wish to see. Every house is roofless and the bazaar has been destroyed for fire-wood—thus progress triumphs by leaps and bounds.

Three hours more took us to Khengirah, a wonderful hollow in the mountains just on the edge of Syria. Here, at last, I met people who would talk. An old man shuffled up to my tent:

"Welcome and welcome again. Peace and delight. You are wise and wonderful—aha! I am a Kerkukli. We came here seven generations ago, 150 years—No, we marry late, say 200. There was a wicked Pasha in Kerkuk, so Hassan Agha left with 100 families and my forbear, Mustafa, the father of Ahmed, the father of Hussim, the father of Ramo, the father of Ahmed, the father of Mustafa, the father of Hasso, and that is me. Kerkuk?—A month's journey; by God! a long road to go. My son went as a soldier to Kerkuk years ago, and

the people said, Are you a Kerkukli? And he said, Yes; and they fed him and feasted him as a brother, for we are not like Turks and Yuruks who know nothing, whether true-begot or bastard. A man should blush not to know his seven generations. Alack, I am old and my sons are taken from me for the foolish war. Pray God they soon come back. Say, will the English soon come to take this rich land? It is very good, and runs to waste. Oho! we are many tribes more—Jillikanli, Bellikanli, Azidinli—you know of them, Mashallah! How many Turks know one from another? Say, will you stay and hunt? There are stags and boars and great partridges. I would you would stay. Soon winter comes and we are shut up from all men, but the land is good."

Since I left Brusa, I had not heard one rattle on in this way. Here was a man to whom it was possible to talk, who answered questions and, above all, asked questions, knew who he was, and whence his people came and had, so to speak, a stake in life.

The next day we went over the pass and down a precipitous path into the Greek valley of Khurman, where is the meeting place of the Kurds, Turks, Armenians and Arabs. We slept that night at the Trappist Monastery of Shaykhly, and thence across the valley, where we found the railway in course of construction.

The first sign of civilisation was a group of three ragged Italian gangers, and then an Armenian also in rags with a motor cap crammed over his ears. "Allo, awr yew Inglissh? Oi arm Inglisshmann. Oi awr barn harsman. Oi bin free year in Arizona, gass dat foine carntry—gass dis poah contry—gass Oi doan't stay heah f'much longer. I'se gwine right away," etc., etc.

At a station we found a camp of engineers who plan the maximum number of kilometres in the minimum number of miles actually traversed, and thence we went to railhead at Rajoni, where this particular section of the Baghdad Railway is temporarily stayed in its disgraceful career.

Begun by the German Emperor's visit which condoned the Armenian massacres, after years of intrigue with the vilest scourings of the palace, and further years of intrigue with the viler scourings of the Committee, the great venture is now fairly

started ; but, though the idea is sound, its parentage and antecedents militate against its being anything but what it is—a pretentious piece of petty chicanery. Germans, to begin with, have no instinct for developing a new country. Accustomed to state aid and to state management, to drill, discipline and formality, they run their zealousness to seed in hosts of unnecessary official regulations, and in enormous expensive stations. At the same time, they neglect every interest of the land they hope to make their own.

Thus we see towns like Kilis and Birejik avoided through sheer carelessness ; sound routes missed through sheer stupidity ; waiting rooms built before goods sheds because some infinitesimal profit can be made off waiting-room door handles by some German firm ; hundreds of miles of railway laid in order to extort a guarantee—a guarantee which, in itself, throttles the real prospects of the country. As a native employee put it to me : " Why do people always prefer to make hundreds dishonestly rather than millions by fair dealing ? " This may seem a difficult question to answer, were it not for the fact that this kind of conduct is precisely what you would expect from a group of Levantine financiers and intriguing politicians.

There is no idealism to make the thing great, as it might have been made great. There is no true business instinct to make it go, as it might be made to go. Instead we have the morals of the Levantine concession-hunter, the greed of a small-minded contractor, and the mismanagement and waste inevitable where economic profits are made unnecessary.

Along this railway we went once again to Aleppo, and then off to Damascus along the Syrian railway. Little did I know what awaited me. We set forth from Aleppo at six o'clock and clanked along the kilometres until ten, when we stopped at a station, where a languid station-master bade us all descend. He said the line had been washed away in five places and that he had no orders except to stop the train. Yes, the line had been washed away the day before, and the 'direction' at Beyrout had been considering the matter. It was impossible to transport passengers—either you must return to Aleppo or stay here. The responsibility attaches to no one. With these few cryptic and uncivil words, he betook himself to a telegraph instrument

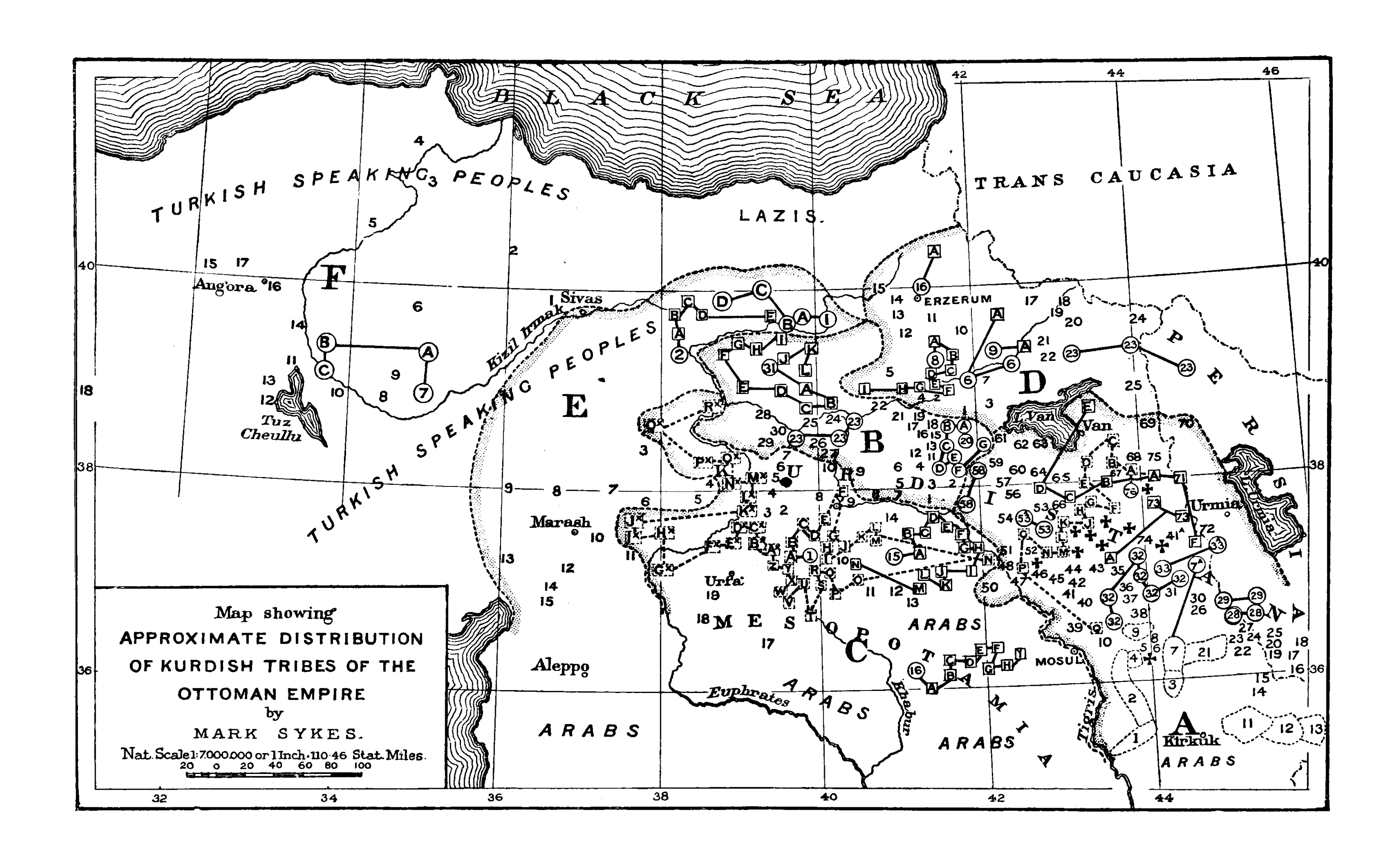
and proceeded for two hours, calling up Hama. A wire to the station-master at Hama elicited the double unnecessary untruths that there were no carriages and that there was no route passable for wheels. The passengers of all ranks and kinds—Greeks, Arabs, Turks, officers, Bedawin, dentists and merchants—wandered aimlessly about wondering what they should do. The poorest packed up and trudged away with their luggage on their backs. The remainder sat down and waited. Presently four camels and two donkeys came bobbing over the plain, and somehow the twenty-five passengers and their various kinds of luggage were mounted on these animals and vanished over the horizon. My tents and servants being too large and cumbrous to move in this way, perforce we had to stay. About two in the afternoon, the train went back to Aleppo and left us disconsolate and despairing. Presently a victoria appeared containing four notables—three grey-bearded men in Arab clothing and one young man in European dress. These were members of the great house of Giloni and were driving thirty miles from their country house to Hama to see the play of "Hamlet" acted by an Egyptian company. The policeman of the station respectfully seized the greatest and oldest of these men by the beard saying: "My Lord! on your mercy! on your greatness, on your nobility, will you find this great person a carriage?"

The old gentleman, thus appealed to, yielded; and, having vouchsafed us the information that there were two hundred carriages in Hama and an excellent road, bade us good-bye and promised to send us sufficient conveyance to carry us thither.

Some five hours later, the carriages appeared and drove us for fifteen miles over a perfect, dry, hard road to Hama. All the day we passed through lines of tents of Anazeh Arabs, camped to pasture their camels. Three Germans and Italians who followed us next day caused some interest by performing the journey each one with a loaded revolver held ostentatiously in his hand. As they drove through Hama in this singular guise, they were surprised to find they were received, not with respect and fear, but with cries of derision accompanied by some stones and mud.

At Hama all was in confusion. French engineers, cursing and swearing, were impeding each other in the distribution of spades to hastily collected gangs of women, children and men.

Five hundred redifs returned from the war hung about the station, and two days' congestion of traffic and an utterly hopeless administration served to bring out all the evil qualities of East and West. Noise, confusion, reviling and cursing, amidst dirt, vermin, offal, grease, coal dust and steam, make the materials for a fine post-impressionist picture; but are not things to be sought after by the average man. Thus, into a lousy carriage an inch deep on the floor in banana skins and nut shells, and broken meats left by its last occupants; and so at last to Damascus, and thus to my journey's end.



Map showing
APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION
OF KURDISH TRIBES OF THE
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
by
MARK SYKES.
Nat. Scale 1:7.000.000 or 1 Inch·110·46 Stat. Miles.
BLACK SEA
TURKISH SPEAKING PEOPLES
TRANS CAUCASIA
LAZIS.
Ang'ora
Sivas
Kizil Irmak
ERZERUM
Tuz Cheullu
Van
Urmia
Marash
Urfa
Aleppo
MOSUL
Kirkuk
Euphrates
Khabur
Tigris
MESOPOTAMIA
ARABS
PERSIA
KURDISTAN

# APPENDIX

## THE KURDISH TRIBES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

### PREFACE

THE materials collected in the ensuing pages are the results of about 7,500 miles of riding and innumerable conversations with policemen, muleteers, mollahs, chieftains, sheep drovers, horse dealers, carriers and other people capable of giving one first hand information. The results, I fear, are extremely meagre, but I hope they may prove of use to future travellers.

As hardly anything has been written on the subject in the English language heretofore, I have not been able to make a study of the Kurds from a bibliographical point of view. However, I trust that this will not detract from the interest of the work. I may add that I had among my servants on my last journey representatives from the three most important sections of the Kurds, so that I was able to obtain interpreters without any great difficulty, a matter of some importance amidst the conflicting dialects of the nomads and sedentary mountaineers.

In preparing the following list of the various tribes of the Kurdish race I have endeavoured to simplify the work of future students by marking down and cataloguing as many of the tribes as have come either directly or indirectly under my notice.

After various abortive attempts at setting them down in a manner comprehensible to anyone but myself, I have decided for the purposes of this work to break up the regions inhabited by Kurds into six zones ; to each of these zones a section of the catalogue is devoted, each section containing a separate enumeration. Thus in the alphabetical list a tribe will be found, as

for instance the Merzigi 76B, section A. To find the position of the tribe the reader must look in zone A on the map for the number 76; he will find this number is connected to a chain of letters; the letter B in this chain will mark the spot where this tribe is to be found, in the catalogue he will find such particulars as I can supply under the number 76B in the printed section A.

Before closing this preface may I say that the zones marked on the map are not ethnological but merely a convenient form of grouping?

## Section A

### *Introduction*

I have chosen this zone as the first to be treated chiefly because the Kurds dwelling in it are apparently the descendants of those ancient Cordueni who harassed Xenophon's retreat, and it is at least the theatre of the Kurds' first appearance on the stage of history. The densely populated zone is bounded on the north by Lake Van and the Armenian table land, on the west by the Tigris, and on the south by the plains of the Irak. I should imagine that the majority of its inhabitants are Kurds; however, we have a considerable foreign element in the plains, and it may be that some of the tribes mentioned in my list are not in fact Kurdish tribes but branches of other peoples who have become affiliated to the original mountain race. The foreign or at least non-Kurdish stocks may briefly be enumerated as the Arabo-Aramean population of Mosul, the pure Arameans as typified in the Nestorian and Jacobite Christians of Ain Kawa, Akra, and Keui Sanjak, the Turkish peoples of Altyn Kiopru, Kerkuk and Erbil, and the Bedawin and Fellahin Arabs on the banks of the Tigris and the plains eastward of Mosul.

The two peoples in this zone concerning whom I am completely in doubt are the Shabak No. 5 and Bejwan No. 10, and the Nestorian Christians of Hakkiari, Amadia and Zakho. The presence of the latter are denoted by a black ✠. The question as to whether these Nestorian Christians of Hakkiari, who have a tribal organisation, are indigenous Kurds or fugitive Christians of Aramean stock, is I think still open; several learned Kurdish[1] notables are of opinion that the Nestorians of Hakkiari are Kurds who were converted to Christianity before the advent of

[1] The names of these gentlemen are:—Shaykh Nasr-ed-din of Tillu; Shaykh Sadiq, of Neheri (now dead); Shaykh Hamid Pasha of Bashkala.

Islam; on the other hand the Christian clergy are firmly convinced that this is not the case. Personally I suspect that both theories are in part true, and that when the Christians fled from Mosul and Irak, they took refuge with the Kurdish Christians of Hakkiari. This would make the Episcopal families new comers, just as many of the Kurdish Moslem chiefs trace their ancestry to Arabian Emirs. I regret that I was unable to obtain particulars as to the names of the Nestorian tribes, but it is to be hoped that the English Mission of the Archbishop of Canterbury will some day supply the deficiency.

With regard to the Kurds I think they may be divided into three classes. Class I.—Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, who are the semi-nomads of the plains and southern hills; Class II, Nos. 21, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41A, 44, 48, 52, 53, 53A, 65, 68, 71A, 71B, 71C, 72, 73, who are the sedentary mountain tribes; Class III, the semi-nomadic mountaineers comprising the remainder of the tribes with the exception of No. 50.

As regards Class I the tribes catalogued under these figures are very similar to one another in habits and appearance. They are usually wealthy shepherds and only cultivate the ground for auxiliary purposes, though they frequently employ extraneous labour for agriculture and traffic in the produce thus obtained. They are expert smiths, weavers, and tent makers. Mentally they are far superior to the majority of Kurds, being apt to education, astute men of business and very industrious. They live under the rule of hereditary tribal nobles, who are usually very quarrelsome, feuds and intertribal wars being common. These semi-nomads, who are known as the Baba or Baban Kurds, are noted for their chivalry, valour, and thieving proclivities; they are all fine horsemen, and expert marksmen, having of late years discarded the lance and sword in favour of the rifle. I should imagine that the great cavalry armies of the Parthians were recruited from similar tribes, as the present evolutions and tactics of these people resemble those of the troops of Surenas as described in Plutarch's *Life of Crassus*. The patron saint of the Baban Kurds is Khalid-ibn-Walid, whom they hold in great reverence, saying that he converted them from Paganism and the worship of fire.

All the tribes mentioned in this class are strictly orthodox Sunni Moslems.

During the months of October, November, December, January and February, they dwell in villages in the vicinity of the numbers as marked on the map; in March they go into tents and remain in them till early in June, at which period many

families from each tribe migrate to the Wazna district with their flocks; during the summer months of July, August and September, whether at Wazna or elsewhere, they lay up their tents and construct bowers of green wood, in which they live until the autumn nights grow chilly, when they return to their villages. Most of the noble families of the tribes in this class intermarry with the Arabs of Mesopotamia. However, their own women are strikingly beautiful and are allowed great freedom, many of the women can ride and shoot as well as the men, but undertake no manual labour beyond making butter and performing ordinary household duties.

*Class II.*—The sedentary mountaineers are completely distinct in custom and dress from the Baban Kurds. They are industrious agriculturists, and cultivate every available piece of ground in the vicinity of their villages, showing great capacity in diverting and damming streams, draining and ditching for the purpose of irrigating the terraced fields in the vicinity of their villages; these fields bear crops of barley, wheat, maize, rice, and excellent tobacco. They live under the rule of tribal chiefs and like the Baban Kurds are constantly at war with one another. The men carry rifles and daggers, and are active fighters and hunters. Each village has in its centre or near it a small double bastioned block-house or castle of hewn stone, where in times of war the people take refuge for purposes of defence. The intertribal battles are often extremely bloody, six or seven men killed out of a party of twenty being not uncommon.

As regards mode of life these Kurds, though sedentary, dwell in bowers erected on the flat roofs of their houses in summer. Like the Baban Kurds their women do not veil and are well treated. Some of the tribes in this category are of opinion that they were converted from Christianity, but most of them have Pagan traditions. Among them dwell a good many Jewish families who are never maltreated, but are not permitted to carry arms or engage in tribal feuds, consequently the Jews travel on trading expeditions from tribe to tribe whether the latter are friends or enemies. Nestorian Christians dwelling amongst these tribes are occasionally found living in a condition of vassalage, but as often as not share and own lands on an equal footing with the Moslem tribesmen.

*Class III.*—The remainder of the Kurds in section A are semi-nomadic mountaineers, being partly agriculturists, partly shepherds, and partly horse dealers; in dress they resemble Class II rather than Class I; they are of a thievish disposition, bloodthirsty, cowardly, and often cruel. Their women are ugly and hard worked, they usually ride donkeys or mules, and are

extremely erratic in their movements. Speaking generally, they differ in appearance from Kurds of Class I and Class II, being big boned, heavily built men, of a very dark complexion. No one who saw them could imagine they were of the same origin. In their wanderings they frequently dispense with tents and shelter behind bales or reed screens. As a rule these semi-nomads are badly armed, poor in goods and of a cowardly nature. In religion they appear to have no fixed belief of any kind, and care very little for such matters, though they are counted as Moslems.

As regards No. 50, section A, the Miran, they are an exception to the above description, and the reader must look under their number for details concerning them. I would also note that in the South Irak, Wazna, and in the vicinity of Mosul, to be a nomad is considered noble; while in the mountains the word *kochar*, or shepherd, is synonymous with "savage," "ignorant" or "brutish."

1. *Daudieh.* 4,000 families. A warlike semi-nomadic tribe inhabiting the banks of the lower Zab. Noted swimmers, poor horsemen. Baban Kurds.
2. *D'sdie.* 5,000 families. A large tribe, partly composed of nomads and partly agriculturists. They intermarry freely with the Gibbur Arab women. This tribe has lost much of its wealth owing to locusts and drought. Their women are exceedingly handsome and affect a peculiar and distinctive dress, *i.e.*, blue turbans like the men, and dark heavy garments, no colour or ornaments of any kind being worn. The men are good horsemen and agriculturists, the headquarters of the tribe are on the Sultan's farm in the Kara Chok Dagh. Baban Kurds.
3. *Shaykh Bezeini.* 4,000 families. A great and warlike tribe, turbulent and fierce. Noted robbers. Great horsemen. Very intelligent, make Martini-Henry rifles. Live in villages in winter, dwell in tents in the vicinity of their villages in spring. After the harvest (June) proceed to Persian frontier with their flocks. Return in September, or later if the season is hot. Dress in Persian fashion. Baban Kurds.
4. *Shaykhan.* 500 families. Completely nomadic, wealthy shepherds, pasture flocks between Tigris and both Zabs. Avow no connection with Yezidis,[1] and often camp with the Tai Arabs, with whom however they do not intermarry. Baban Kurds.

[1] See No. 46, Section A.

5. *Shabak.* 500 families. Sedentary, said to be Shias by some, others affirm them to have a secret religion, others that they are Babis, others that they acknowledge a prophet named *Baba.*
6. *Mamund.* ? families. I know nothing of this tribe but I expect it is really a sub-tribe of the Hamawand No. 11, section A.
7. *Girdi.* 6,000 families. A powerful tribe of shepherds, agriculturists and warriors, occasionally robbers. Dress in Persian fashion, very wealthy and good horsemen. They employ the Khoshnao No. 21, section A, to do agricultural work for them. They proceed to the Wazna district in summer to pasture their flocks. One section of this tribe dwelling at Uskaf Safka is well disposed to strangers, another, living about four hours west of Ain Kawa, are noted highwaymen. Baban Kurds.

A. *Girdi.* 1,200 families. These Girdi migrated from the vicinity of Girdmamik about sixty years ago; they have abandoned the use of tents in the summer and are now not to be distinguished from the surrounding mountaineers. They are industrous and wealthy. They still correspond with the mother tribe and send presents to the chief at Uskaf Safka each spring. Baban Kurds.

8. *Khalkani.* 700 families. Semi-nomadic, but unwarlike. Baban Kurds.
9. *Surchi.* 3,000 families. 1,000 of the households are complete nomads. The Surchi have no peculiarities. Baban Kurds. A small tribe of Mamakanli, see section D, Nos. 8G and 9A are attached to the Surchi, evidently they migrated southward at some time, and have become absorbed; see section A, No. 26.
10. *Bejwan.* 800 families. Speak a mixed language, apparently half Arabic, half Kurd, said by neighbours to be of Turkish origin and to be followers of Hajji Bektash.
11. *Hamawand.* 1,200 families. The most valiant, courageous, and intelligent of the Baban Kurd tribes. Splendid horsemen, crack shots, capable smiths, bold robbers, good agriculturists; such as enter the government service prove capable officials. In 1878, 600 Hamawand horsemen armed only with lances penetrated far into the Caucasus, and brought back immense spoils. The Turkish government has of late years done much to suppress this tribe's power, but the men are still famous for their prowess and intelligence, and the women for

their beauty. The Hamawand intermarry freely with the Arabs, and reckon themselves of Arabian origin. Most of the Hamawand speak Arabic, their language is, however, Kurdish. Dress, partly Arab, partly Persian. Formerly they were noted lancers, however, they now only carry a modern rifle and dagger.

12. *Jaff.* 10,000 families. A great semi-nomadic tribe, as famous as the Hamawand ; Salah-ed-din was supposed to have been of this tribe ; they inhabit both sides of the frontier. The Jaff leaders are noted for not betraying one another as do other Kurdish chiefs, hence their numbers and independence. They are supposed to dislike Europeans. Baban Kurds.
13. *Guran.* ? families. Baban Kurds.
14. *Nuredi.* ? families. Baban Kurds.
15. *Piran.* 900 families. Similar in customs to No. 3, section A; said to be a sub-tribe of the Hartushi, No. 76, section A. However, as I am not certain on this point, I have marked them as a separate tribe.
16. *Alan.* ? families. This name occurs in a sub-tribe of the Hartushi (see No. 76E, section A), but I could find no connection. We see a tribe in section C, No. 15M, called Alian. Baban Kurds.
17. *Baki Khassa.* ? families. Baban Kurds.
18. *Kialoner.* ? families. Baban Kurds.
19. *Ghowruk.* ? families. Baban Kurds.
20. *Malkari.* ? families. Baban Kurds.
21. *Khoshnao.* 2,000 families. Completely sedentary. Work for Girdi and Shaykh Bezeini, Nos. 7 and 3, and occasionally look after crops of latter tribes during season of absence. Reputed to be poor fighters. Following account of origin was given me by chief Agha of the tribe :— "Ambesbudast was the son of Saranduz, and Saranduz was the Wazir of Sultan Selim. The son of Imam Hussein gave the forefathers of Ambudabest a seal-ring and lordship over all the lands between Kermanshah and Mosul. Ambesbudast was the forefather of the Khoshnao. The two saints of the tribe are Hanifa and Mazdak."[1]
22. *Bilbas.* 400 families. Frontier tribe. Baban Kurds. Semi-nomadic, spend the summer at Wazna.
23. *Acu.* 500 families. Semi-nomadic, some live in the town of Rania, great warriors and good horsemen. Spend summer at Wazna. Baban Kurds.

[1] Mazdak, it will be remembered, was the founder of a religion in Persia during the sixth century.

24. *Mamash.* 2,000 families. Complete nomads. Baban Kurds, spend summer at Wazna.
25. *Mengor.* 2,000 families. A warlike tribe, semi-nomadic, spend summer at Wazna.
26. *Mamakan.* ? families. This tribe now counts as a sub-tribe of the Surchi, No. 9, section A ; the name Mamakan, or variations of it, reappears in section C, No. 15E Del Mamakan, and in section D, No. 8G Mamagan, a sub-tribe of the No. 8 Jibranli, and No. 9A Mamakanli, a sub-tribe of No. 9 Sipikanli. Armenian priests and the tribesmen of No. 9A state that the Mamakanli were Armenians who became Moslems. Probably they were a Christian tribe of nomads and have been completely scattered. The Mamakan, Mamagan, and the Del Mamakan have no tradition that I know of.
27. *Baliki.* ? families. A frontier tribe of which I know nothing more than that it exists, however it may be in some way connected with the Bellikan, No. 81, section D, and with No. 15, section E, Bellikanli. However, as the Bellikan, No. 8I, are Zazas, it seems to mė improbable.
28. *Pirastini.* 1,100 families. Baban Kurds. Village dwellers, similar to the Khoshnao, No. 21, section A.
29. *Zemzan.* ? families.
30. *Badeli.* ? families. This is the name of a small, sedentary tribe of Sunni Kurds living at Rowandiz ; they acknowledge no connection with the Badeli, No. 1D, section E.
31. *Shirwan.* 1,800 families. Sedentary, their name is taken from the locality in which they live, industrious, hospitable, but warlike.
32. *Herki.* 3,000 families. A great, nomadic tribe, much scattered, some are to be found near Erzerum, others near Van, and great numbers near Mosul. The Herki are a very dark-skinned people ; their neighbours say they are not Kurds at all but some savage race. The Herki women are very bold and manly. The Herki sleep out in autumn without any tents. Taken as a whole they are a low, dirty tribe, owning large flocks of sheep, and dealing in inferior pack horses ; it is impossible to mark them down with any accuracy, as they seem to have no fixed beats. They generally camp in small numbers and move about in little detachments. Their divisions are as follows :—

    *Mendan.* We see the name again as a sub-tribe of the Milli in northern Mesopotamia, see section C, No. 1G.

*Zerhati.* Sub-tribe of Herki, roves about in the vicinity of Van.

*Zeydan.* Sub-tribe of Herki. This name appears again as a sub-tribe of the great Pinianishli, No. 73, section A, and once again as a sub-tribe of Motikan, section B, No. 20E.

*Hajji.* 200 families. Sub-tribe of Herki. This is the sedentary section of the Herki, and lives in the centre of the place marked with the number 32.

33. *Baradost.* 1,500 families. Tribe taking its name from the Baradost river.

A. *Baradost.* 650 families. Tribe taking its name from the Baradost river.

34. *Berzan.* 750 families. Taking tribal name from district of Berzan ; this tribe is famous for its fighting qualities and a certain holy family known as that of the Shaykhs of Berzan.

35. *Nirva.* 800 families. Sedentary.

36. *Reikan.* 800 families. Sedentary.

37. *Zebar.* 1,000 families. This is a district containing about 30 villages inhabited almost entirely by sedentary Kurds who are called Zebar Kurds. They are careful farmers, good vine growers, good builders, hospitable to strangers, but incredibly quarrelsome among themselves. Their chiefs build small castles in which they are generally being besieged unless they are besieging someone else. These Kurds are usually plucky fighters on their own ground. They have a chronic feud with the Shaykhs of Berzan, see No. 34, section A.

38. *Ashaghi.* I can give no particulars of this tribe.

39. *Hasseina.* ? families. A small broken tribe of nomads and villagers near Mosul.

40. *Mizuri.* 120 families. A poor sedentary tribe.

41. *Doshki.* 500 families. At Dehok. This section has a bad name for thieving and brigandage. Kermanji, evidently an offshoot of No. 41A, section A.

A. *Doshki.* 2,000 families. Industrious agriculturists at Geaver (Giaver).

42. *Jellali.* 4,000 families. Both sedentary and nomadic near Amadia. We find the name reappear in section B, No. 14. The latter is evidently a migration from Amadia. However, whether this Jellali is the mother tribe of the Jellikanli, No. 12, section E, is by no means certain.

43. *Dere.* 800 families.

44. *Berwari.* 600 families. Sedentary.

45. *Kohan.* 70 families. Nomads, probably a sub-tribe, but of which I know not.
46. *Shaykhan.* Yezidis or devil-worshippers. ? families. Semi-nomadic. This tribe dwells near Shaykh Adi, the religious centre of the Yezidis and the dwelling place of the religious head of the sect. There is also a temporal chief who used to live there, but I understand that he now keeps his whereabouts a secret. The tribe takes its name from Shaykh Adi. There is nothing to show that it has any connection, other than religious, with the Yezidis of the Sinjar. See section C, No. 16.
47. *Reshkan.* ? families. There are said to be some Yezidis in this tribe.
48. *Haweri.* Yezidis or devil-worshippers. 300 families. These live near Zakho. I suspect some connection with the Haverka, section C, No. 151.
49. *Spirti.* 70 families. Nomads. The name was given me while passing their tents. I had not, however, time to investigate.
50. *Miran.* 1,000 families. Low tribe of shepherds migrating from Jazirah-ibn-Omar to Lake Van in spring and returning in autumn. This tribe has an atrocious reputation for all kinds of villainy. Curiously enough they are usually very friendly to Christians and Europeans, but treat Moslems in a scandalous fashion. They move up to within about 15 miles of Lake Van annually, passing Shernakh on their way. They have a chronic feud with the Goyan tribe, section A, No. 53A.
51. *Hasseina.* 500 families. I cannot connect this with Hasseina, No. 39, section A.
52. *Sindi.* Total number of families 1,500. A mixed tribe of Moslems and Nestorians, latter in a minority. Sedentary. Two sub-tribes—*Slope*, 600 families, and *Guli*, 30 families.
53. *Goyan.* 1,400 families. A large and powerful tribe of sedentary and semi-nomadic Kurds. They have, I expect, several sub-divisions, but I have been unable to obtain their names. This branch contains a certain number of Zazas, for particulars of whom see section B. The Goyan are noted for independence and valour. They slew Mustafa Pasha, the great chief of the Miran, in a pitched battle in 1899.

A. *Shernakhli.* 600 families. Name given to a sedentary section of the Goyan living at Shernakh.

54. *Dakhori.* ? families. A few sedentary Kurds in the vicinity of Shernakh, probably a section of the Goyan.

55. *Shiriki.* 200 families. Wealthy sedentary tribe. Name suggests connection with the Zirikanli, No. 10, section D.
56. *Balian.* 70 families. Semi-nomadic, poor and scattered. Similar to the Herki, No. 32, Section A.
57. *Eiru.* 100 families.
58. *Atmanikan.* 5,000 families. Very wealthy nomads. May be often seen in the Bitlis pass and near Bohtan, where their headquarters are. They dress like the Herki, No. 32, section A, but have not the bad reputation of the latter. They have hardly any horses. In summer they migrate up to the Mush plain.
59. *Silukan.* 900 families. Cultivators and nomads. Similar to No. 58, section A. Also migrate in summer to the Mush plain.
60. *Kichian.* 150 families. Nomads.
61. *Duderi.* 400 families. Nomads in summer on the south shore of Lake Van.
62. *Alikanli.* 150 families. Nomads. Very insignificant. Probably a sub-tribe, but could not discover whose.
63. *Halaji.* 900 families. Mixed sedentary Kurds, Turks, and Armenians, dwelling on the southern shores of Lake Van.
64. *Tiyan.* 300 families. This tribe has a bad name. It is said by some to be an isolated fragment of the great Arab tribe of Tai, but I do not know if there are any grounds for this belief.
65. *Hawatan.* 300 families. Sedentary in the Bohtan district.
66. *Keka.* ? families. Near Julamerik.
67. *Bellicar.* 180 families. A small tribe of semi-nomadic Kurds; no connection with Belliki or Bellikanli. They state that they were converted from heathenism by Khalid-ibn-Walid.
68. *Khani.* 180 families. Sedentary near Khoshab.
69. *Takuli.* 450 families. Perhaps a sub-tribe of the Zilanli; the Takuli think they came from Erzerum about 100 years ago. They are now sedentary, of very poor physique, and appear to be of the same low race as the Sipikanli north of Lake Van mentioned in the introduction to section D.
70. ? families. Owing to an accident the name of a tribe has here been lost. I leave the number blank in hopes of some day re-discovering the right name.
71. *Shekak.* Total number of families 6,000. A notable tribe; they are called Revand by the local Armenians.

They only spend three months in tents, and therefore may be called sedentary. The following sub-tribes are, I think, only an ancient political confederation, and not attached by ties of blood.

A. *Shekifti.* 1,200 families. Completely sedentary.

B. *Mukeri.* 1,200 families. Completely sedentary; said to have migrated from Persia fifty years ago; split in two portions, one at Nourdous and one at Khoshab.

C. *Sheveli.* ? families. This tribe crops up again near Iskilip; I presume a forcible migration in Selim's time.

D. *Butan.* ? families.

E. *Sheveli.* ? families.

F. *Shekak.* 1,000 families. A southern branch of the Shekak; complete nomads.

72. *Zerzan.* 100 families.

73. *Pinianishli.* 1,200 families. A large tribe and head of a confederation of which the following are the chief branches. It is impossible to locate them more precisely than by saying they inhabit the country in the vicinity of the No. 73, section A. The following are the names of the affiliated tribes.

*Zeydan.* There are some Zeydan in Modeki, No. 20E, section B, and as we have seen a sub-tribe of the Herki, No. 32C, section A.

*Barkoshan.* ? families.

*Kinarberosh.* ?

*Suratawan.* ?

*Billijan.* ?

*Jelli.* ? families. I suggest the mother tribe of No. 12, section E.

*Gewiji.* ? families. I suggest the mother tribe of No. 12, section E.

*Shevilan.* Obviously a fragment of No. 71C and 71E, section A.

*Musanan.* For remarks see section B, No. 12.

A. *Little Pinianishli.* 500 families. Apparently an offshoot of No. 73. There is supposed to be something disgraceful about this tribe, what I do not know. 13 of its families are Yezidis, others Christians.

74. *Givran.* ? families. This is the name of a small tribe in the district of Giaver. Local authorities state that the name merely indicates Giaver-an, *i.e.*, Giaver people, in which case it may have no connection with No. 8, section C, and No. 31L, section B.

75. *Shemsiki.* 900 families. An interesting tribe, once nomadic, now sedentary. The chiefs consider themselves of Arab stock and look on the common tribesmen as of low race. The tribesmen are very ugly as a rule, the chiefs refined and handsome.

76. *Hartushi.* This is a very important Kurdish tribe, and I suggest that investigation may some day show that it is the connecting link between the Kurds of Irak and the Kurds of Armenia. The nomadic branches of this tribe have a very bad reputation. Although richer than the Herki, No. 32, section A, they resemble them in mode of life and general appearance. The following are the sub-tribes.

A. *Ezdinan.* ? families. Said to be Yezidis. There is no mistake about the name.
B. *Merzigi.* 900 families. Sedentary near Bashkala.
C. *Mamresh.* 200 families. Yezidi religion but belong to Hartushi tribe.
D. *Mamed.* 200 families. I believe this sub-tribe of the Hartushi to be sedentary.
E. *Alan.* ? families.
F. *Beroz.* 60 families. Famous as cultivators of tobacco.
G. *Jiriki.* ? families.
H. *Shidan.* ? families.
J. *Mamkhor.* 400 families. Very warlike nomads.
K. *Khawistan.* ? families.
L. *Sharafan.* 3,000 families. The largest branch of the Hartushi nomads; descend south of Akra in spring.
M. *Mamadan.* 200 families. I think sedentary; some occasionally descend to the Beykhey Dagh, near Zakho.
N. *Gavdan.* 300 families. Nomads, very bad reputation as thieves, unhospitable and savage. Wealthy horse breeders. Camp in spring near Zakho.
O. *Zedek.* Nomads.
P. *Zefki.* 150 families. Nomads, shepherds.
Q. *Hafjan.* 500 families. Nomads.

## SECTION B

The tribes inhabiting this zone are completely cut off from the others mentioned in the catalogue, and have little or nothing in common with them. The barriers which divide this

region from the zones A, C, D, and E may be enumerated as follows.

Firstly, the great Bitlis gorge, which can only be approached from either extremity and forms a kind of natural dyke between zone B and A. Secondly, the Tigris which is usually unfordable and practically interrupts all communication with C. Thirdly, the huge spurs of the Eastern Taurus range which act as a protecting wall against D. Fourthly, the upper Euphrates which separates the Dersim mountains from the overlapping portions of zone E.

From the point of view of a casual observer, I should be inclined to group the Kurdish tribes in this zone into five classes—

Class I. Would include numbers 1 to 10, 27 and 29.
Class II. No. 20 and its appendant letters.
Class III. Nos. 12 to 19.
Class IV. No. 23.
Class V. No. 31 and its appendant letters.

As regards Class I, they appear to be semi-nomadic and sedentary tribes who have at some period migrated *viâ* the Bitlis pass into the undulating arable pasture land between Diarbekir and the Bitlis Su. These people may quite possibly be a part of that multitude of tribes who lived in a state of vassalage to the ancient Kings of Armenia; the names Bekran, No. 6, and Musik, No. 1, both well known in the old histories, give colour to this idea. At any rate these tribes of the southern plains own no connection with any of the tribes mentioned in the other classes.

As to the habits and dress of this class, I can give very few details, as on each occasion that I passed through their country I was unable to make any study of them with the exception of the Tirikan, No. 9. The men appear to be tall and well built, fairly industrious, but not very hospitable.

Classes II, III, IV, and V are dealt with in the catalogue as classes *en bloc* and need no further comment.

1. *Musik.* ? families. This tribe has been mentioned by previous travellers, but I could obtain no account of it. I do not omit it because the Chaldaean historian Toma of Merdis makes mention of the name. There is, however, a village in Motikan called Mosik. None of the Motikan Kurds, however, make use of the name as a tribal designation.

2. *Penjinan.* 500 families. A tribe noted for its fighting qualities. There are said to be some Yezidi families among them.

3. *Keskoli.* ? families. I am doubtful as to this tribe's existence, it is probably a local name for a division of the Penjinan.

4. *Pouran.* 200 families. Semi-nomads, pastoral and agriculturists.

5. *Shaykhdodanli.* 200 families. I do not know if this tribe is sedentary or nomadic. There are a great number of non-tribal Kurds in this neighbourhood. A further difficulty lies in the fact that the Kurds of this region are averse to making known their tribal names or customs; resemblance of the name to the Duderi and Dudikanli should be noted.

6. *Bekran.* 500 families. Nomads; winter near Diarbekir, and summer near Sairt; tradition states that they are the descendants of the Bagratunians. The Armenian clergy generally speak with some certainty on this point. We see the name Bekiran, No. 16H, section C, among the Yezidis of the Sinjar. The Yezidis of the Sinjar believe that they came from a country north of the Tigris.

7. *Reshkotanli.* 500 families. Nomads; the Rushdunians are often mentioned in the history of Chamich, the Armenian priest; there is a peculiar resemblance in the name.

8. *Besheri.* ? families. A sedentary tribe between Sairt, Meyfarkin, and Diarbekir.

9. *Tirikan.* 650 families. A sedentary tribe between the Euphrates and Haini; fond of bright coloured clothes; wealthy and intelligent; kindly disposed to the few Armenians who live among them. The local Armenians state that they are of common origin and that they (the Armenians) are not of Armenian race; this idea is naturally discouraged by the Armenian clergy and laity of Diarbekir, but I have it on the authority of a priest and Christian headman of the district.

10. *Kuzlichan.* ? families. This is a small tribe located as on map; the name is that of a district in the Dersim Mountains, about 80 miles north. I think we may infer a southerly migration from that region.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11. *Zekeri.* | ? | families. | See note, next paragraph. |
| 12. *Musi.* | ? | " | |
| 13. *Sarmi.* | 400 | " | |
| 14. *Jellali.* | 100 | " | |
| 15. *Khazali.* | 50 | " | |
| 16. *Bederi.* | ? | " | |
| 17. *Malashigo.* | ? | " | |
| 18. *Bosikan.* | 180 | " | |
| 19. *Kurian.* | 180 | " | |

NOTE.—The Bosikan and Kurian, Nos. 18 and 19, and the sub-tribe of the Bosikan, No. 15, inhabit the district between Mush and Kabeljous. Their tradition is that they used to worship a sword thrust in the ground and the moon and stars, and that they lived under the government of a Christian King named Tavit, who dwelt in the castle of Boso. Presently there came a certain Shaykh Nasr-ed-din, from the Caliph at Baghdad, who slew King Tavit and enlightened the people in the truths of Islam. The Emirs of Nasr-ed-din were Zakharia, Saru and Musa, and these brought with them their henchmen who formed the tribes of Zekeri, No. 11, Musi, No. 12, Sarmi, No. 13; after this settlement other tribes, namely, Malashigo, No. 17, Bederi, No. 16, and Jellali, No. 14, followed in the wake of the first and helped to drive the Bosikan and Kurian into the northern mountains. All these tribes have Armenians attached, and those with the Bosikan and Kurian are said to be the descendants of followers of King Tavit. None of the Armenians in this district bear any resemblance to those of the Mush plain or the villagers near Van, nor are they to be distinguished from the Bosikan and Kurian Kurds in dress or appearance. The Malashigo and tribes Nos. 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 call themselves Arabs, and besides talking Kermanji and Armenian, also talk among themselves a peculiar bastard Arabic which is just comprehensible, but almost as different from ordinary Arabic as is Italian from French. It is far more difficult to understand than the Arabic spoken at Sairt. At Tillu, a large village in the vicinity of Sairt, resides at present a certain Shaykh Nasr-ed-din, who is supposed to be the lineal descendant of the Shaykh Nasr-ed-din previously mentioned. I met one of his nephews who told me that the family had a document giving them Tillu and certain lands; this paper was signed by Sultan Selim the conqueror of Persia. The

family consider themselves to be of Abbasid stock and although few of them ever leave Kurdistan they make it a point to talk good Arabic among themselves. Shaykh Nasr-ed-din's nephew, who appeared a very well read man, told me he thought that the tribes Nos. 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17 were not really of Arabian origin, but that they had accepted Islam and changed their tribal names for those of their conquerors, whose language they adopted and then corrupted.[1]

20. *Modeki* (*Motikan*). This is the name of a peculiar and inaccessible mountain region north of Bitlis, and incidentally the appellation of all Kurds who dwell within it. I endeavoured to effect an entrance, but was unable to do so; anyone wishing to explore this district must do so on foot; the tribes inhabiting it are apparently mostly Zazas; they are extremely wild and shy, and difficult to talk to. Other Kurds who had been into the Motikan district supplied me with the following particulars:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A. *Keyburan.* | Zaza Kurds. | |
| B. *Bubanli.* | " " | |
| C. *Kusan.* | " " | |
| D. *Rutchaba.* | " " | |
| E. *Zeidan.* | Kermanji Kurds. | |
| F. *Erikli.* | " " | (Sometimes called Khiatra.) |
| G. *Pir Musi.* | " " | |

By all accounts the Bubanli are the most ancient tribe in Modeki, the Zeydan, as we have seen in No. 32, section A, and No. 73, section A, are split as sub-tribes elsewhere. If the story that the Kermanjis of Motikan are slaves to the Zazas be true, there would be some ground for supposing that the former entered as refugees, particularly as the extremely difficult nature of the ground forbids the idea of its being conquered by anything but a regular army. Apparently the Zazas of Motikan are neither Moslems nor Christians. I would suggest that a thorough exploration of this district would prove very interesting, and might throw a wonderful light on the history of Armenia, if a good collection of folk songs and legends could be made.

[1] We have already seen the name Jellali in section A, No. 42, and the Musanan, No. 73, Section A, perhaps the tribes Musi and Jellali, Nos. 12 and 14, section B, are descendants of some of the former who may have assisted Shaykh Nasr-ed-din.

21. *Pinjari.* 450 families. Sasun district speak Kermanji.
22. *Slivan.* ? families. Probably Zazas.
23. *Non-tribal Zazas.* 1,000 families. In the locality where this number appears there are a quantity of non-tribal Zazas. Their state is almost anarchical, and they seem, although not naturally cruel or vicious, to have hardly any regard for human life; they frankly say they are as beasts of the field, and have hardly any religion. As an example of how unsophisticated these people are, I might cite the fact that such as I have met who have served in the Army have often become devout Moslems and look with shame on their previous state. They appear to have no idea of tribal organisation. They speak the Zaza language and seem very poor farmers.

    The Zazas are small, impish people with shrill voices, and are extremely shy before strangers. I should imagine that they are the remains of a primitive mountain race, similar to the Bhils.

    The only instance I have encountered of Zazas living on the plains or in the country is at Suverek where a few live with the Karagetch.
24. *Kedak.* 600 families. Zazas due south of Pera on the Veshin Dagh.
25. *Ashmishart.* 500 families. Zazas. Shia sect.
26. *Kulbin.* ? families. Zazas.
27. *Gurus.* ? families. Beyond the name I could obtain no particulars concerning this tribe. Ibrahim Pasha,[1] however, knows the name.
28. *Sinan.* ? families. Zazas.
29. *Elia.* ? families. Nomads; impossible to ascertain whether Zazas or Kermanji Kurds.
30. *Behirmaz.* 500 families. Zazas. Shia sect.
31. *Dersimli.* General appellation of Kurds living in the Dersim. With the exception of No. 31C, section B, Shawak, all the Dersim tribes are apparently Pagans, who call themselves Shias, their religion, as far as I could ascertain, being a mixture of magic and nature worship, which again develops into Pantheism. A man of this region said to me, "I do not worship God, for a part cannot worship the whole." However, they are Shia Moslems in outward form, swearing by Ali, and call him the greatest of the prophets, this, I think, chiefly to annoy the Sunnis. The Dersimli are doubtless robbers and

[1] No. 1, section C.

cut-throats, but I doubt their courage, since a very little show of authority suffices to keep them in their fastnesses, whither it is difficult to follow them. All round the foot of the Dersim there are tribes who live in a kind of feudal vassalage to Beys who talk Turkish and veil their women; at first I imagined these Beys were the descendants of holders of Turkish military fiefs, of whom one is always hearing and never meeting; as on former occasions these "Turkish" Beys turned out to be the descendants of indigenous chiefs, who have settled down and adopted Turkish customs. The Dersimli are small, wiry men with sharp features; they are intelligent and have a keenly developed artistic sense for colour and dress. There are indeed on the slopes of the Dersim some Turks, but they are Ak Koyunlu, of Uzun Hassan, and live in a kind of commune of their own; for history of latter see De Guignes' *Histoire des Huns.* As far as I could ascertain, the Dersimli have a special dialect of their own but it is closely allied to Zaza. Most of the Dersim tribes are regular migrants from south to north in late spring; their villages are left quite empty without caretakers.

A. *Milan.* This is the original mother tribe of the great Milli confederation in northern Mesopotamia, with whom they still keep up communication. For particulars of the legend and importance attached to the name Milli or Milan, see No. 1, section C.

B. *Kechel.* 1,000 families. Near Palu.

C. *Shawak.* ? families. Sedentary; lately converted to orthodox Sunnism.

D. *Ferhad Ushaghi.* ? families. In the vicinity of Surpignan. This is the only Kurdish tribal name beginning with F.

E. *Bakhtiarli.* ? families. Perhaps 30 villages near Chemishgezek; semi-nomadic, or at least migratory, having two villages, one on the high land and one in the valley.

F. *Karabanli,* ? families. At Asunik.

G. *Mirzanli.* ? families. Exact location in Dersim unknown.

H. *Abbasanli.* ? families. Make splendid carpets of great intricacy of design and fineness in weaving.

I. *Balashaghi.* 2,000 families. Sedentary.

J. *Latchin Ushaghi.* ? families. At Amuga.

K. *Kuzlichan.* ? families. This is certainly not the name of a tribe, but of a Dersim district containing several tribes; however, the name crops up as that of a tribe

north of Diarbekir, I presume a migration of some families from the Dersim.

L. *Givran.* ? families. Reported to be in Dersim, but I am doubtful.

## SECTION C

This zone is in reality the ancient province of the Northern Jazirah of the Empire of the Caliphs of Baghdad; the Kurds inhabiting it may be roughly classed as follows:—

Class I, No. 1 and appendant letters. This class may be divided into two subsections—

(1) No. 1 to No. 1 Dx.
(2) No. 1 Ex to No. 1 Rx.

Class II, No. 15 and appendant letters.
Class III, No. 16 and appendant letters.
Class IV, the remaining numbers with the exception of 18.

With regard to Class I, sub-section 1, they are evidently partly formed of a great migration from the Dersim district in the reign of Sultan Selim, but owing to intermarriage for many generations with the Arab, Aramean and Kurdish peoples of the district, and by absorbing many of the local tribes, they have lost their original characteristics. They are poor cultivators, but good herdsmen and carpet weavers.

Their mode of life is simple, January, February, March and April they spend in the lower slopes of the Karaja Dagh, April and May on the plains of Mesopotamia; June, July August and September sees them move up towards Diarbekir; in October, November and December they move once more southwards.

Sub-section No. 2. These tribes admit themselves of the same race and origin as subsection No. 1, but are cut off from it by the Euphrates river; they are all Shias or Pagans of the Dersimli type. At certain seasons priests from the Dersim district visit them and hold religious services.

Their dress is similar to that of the Turkish speaking people of Anatolia; however, their women veil before Moslems and Christians. The men are not very remarkable for any particular characteristic.

*Class II.*—It is very difficult to state with any preciseness whether the tribes included in this class can be termed Kurds

proper or no. I presume that they represent scattered fragments of the old Aramean population, mixed with Imperial colonists of Roman times, Kurds, Persians, Turks and Mongols.

Some tribes are wholly Moslem, others wholly Christian (Jacobite sect), others devil-worshippers, others contain adherents of all three religions. Taken as a whole they are industrious and capable people, good stone-masons, and admirable vine-growers, but withal fierce, bloodthirsty, vindictive, revengeful, and treacherous. Peculiar religious movements are not uncommon amongst them, and the adoption of Evangelical Protestantism by a certain number has been productive of unexpected developments.

*Class III.*—The great Yezidi or devil-worshipping community and tribal confederation of the Sinjar is entirely Kurdish. In physique the Yezidis of the Sinjar resemble the Dersimli Kurds, being small-boned, wiry, lean and hungry-looking men, with pinched features, small hooked noses, pointed chins, broad, shallow lower jaws, high cheek bones, narrow close set black eyes, and thin lips. They twist their hair in six or seven small braided plaits which hang down on either side of their faces.

The dress of the Sinjar tribes is unlike that of any other people, and I should imagine of remote antiquity. It consists of a pointed brown felt cap, a white shirt of cotton cut square at the neck and with no opening in front, a cloak of gazelle skin or light brown leather, raw hide sandals, and leather belt.

By their own tradition they migrated to the Sinjar after Timur's invasion. However, they admit that the Yezidi faith existed in the Sinjar mountain long before that date.

*Class IV.*—These Kurds of northern Mesopotamia are the off-scourings and riff-raff of all Kurdistan, rogues, thieves, vagabonds and bullies almost to a man; they seem to have no single redeeming virtue, being idle, cowardly, and cruel. They have little pride of race and seemingly intermarry and mix with gypsies and other low nomad tribes. From this class, however, must be excepted No. 18, and No. 10, who have evidently migrated at some period from the plains north of Lake Van.

*Note.*—East of Urfa there is a large settlement of gypsies, who will pretend they are Kurdish tribesmen; the traveller should be on his guard against the information they will give him. The word "Nowar," or the question, "Do you come from Howek?" will invariably silence them, or make them admit their true origin.

1. *Milli.* 30 families. This name has a curious and peculiar mystery attached to it, which innumerable cross-examina-

tions on my part of every kind of Kurd has failed to elucidate to my own satisfaction. Some people merely say that the Milli were a powerful tribe who were broken up by the Turks in the 18th century. The facts at present stand as follows:—Ibrahim Pasha is chief of the Milli, and although his own tents do not amount to more than thirty, he has complete jurisdiction over more than 2,000. Secondly, he is spoken of with great respect and reverence by the Kizilbash of Malatia, not because he is wealthy, but because he is the head of the Milli; thirdly, he is the only stranger who can travel through the Dersim without an escort; fourthly, the Shemsiki, No. 75, section A, look on him as their nominal head; fifthly, isolated villages in Anatolia and the Erzinjan district speak of him as their patriarchal chief. Now this is all the more peculiar since in the Kurds enumerated there are Shias, Pagans, Pantheists, Zazas, and orthodox Moslems, of which latter faith he is; his influence is therefore neither political nor religious, and yet influence he has, for Kurds will come from miles around to ask his opinion on family quarrels and generally take his verdict as final.

Again, there are certain tribes which, although allied to him in war, have no regard for his patriarchal position. Ibrahim's own explanation is as follows:—"Years and years ago the Kurds were divided into two branches, the Milan and Zilan; there were 1,200 tribes of the Milan, but God was displeased with them and they were scattered in all directions, some vanished, others remained; such as remained respect me as the head of the Milan."

Now the tradition with Ibrahim is that all this happened long before the days of Mohammed; thus, some Milan are Christians, others, Yezidis; the Milan tradition is that they are children of Shem and came from Arabia, but that the Zilan are from the East. Now this vague legend is found almost in its entirety among the Kurds of the Dersim, save that there we have the following variation:—

The Milan came from Arabia and settled in the Dersim; however, when Sultan Selim conquered West Kurdistan, his Vizier saw that the Kurds wandered up and down the Dersim slopes, and that the land was crowded with nomads, the Vizier ordered such as wished to cultivate, to build houses, and such as wished to remain in tents to go south; some built houses, learned Turkish and veiled their women; others fled to the

Dersim fastnesses, and others went south; among the latter the chief family of whom Ibrahim Pasha is now the head.

Among other stories of the Milan is the one that the Zilan are a base and ignoble race; curiously enough, wherever one meets a tribe admittedly of Zilan origin (they are in section D, Nos. 6, 9, 9A, and 17) you find rough and barbarous people with a peculiarly hideous cast of countenance. The legend to me is extremely interesting, but the way in which Milan Kurds would suddenly grow vague or change the subject while relating fragments of it was more than maddening. The reader would be surprised if he knew the months of toil I endured in collecting the above small paragraph.

All avowed Milan tribes are starred.

* A. *Danan.* 250 families. Nomads.
* B. *Seidan.* 450 families. Nomads. We have seen a similar name in section A, Nos. 32 and 73, and section B, No. 20E, but on this occasion I suggest the name is derived from some leader, either a Sayid or a man called Said.
* C. *Kiran.* 550 families. Nomads. Ibrahim Pasha suggests that these are of the same tribe as the Yezidi tribes; of course these Kiran are orthodox Moslems.
*D. *Dudikanli.* ? families. Nomads. With Ibrahim in northern Mesopotamia; there are five villages near Varto who speak Zaza, and there are said to be some in the Dersim, see section B.

(?)*E. *Khalajan.* 700 families, Nomads.

(?)*F. *Kelish.* ? families. Nomads.

*G. *Mendan.* ? families. Nomads, a small sub-tribe of No. 1; whether these have moved from the Herki, No. 32, section A, to the Karaja Dagh or *vice versa*, is difficult to say.

*H. *Kumnaresh.* 350 families. Nomads.

* I. *Sherkian.* 80 families. Nomads.

* J. *El Kawat.* ? families. Nomads.

*K. *Dashi.* ? families. Nomads.

*L. *Meshkenli.* ? families. Nomads.

*M. *Kalendelan.* ? families. Nomads reported in the Dersim, section B.

*N. *Hajji Bairam.* ? families. Nomads.

*O. *Hassanekan.* 260 families. Nomads. These have nothing to do with the Hassananli, who are avowedly Zilan.

* P. *Khalajari.* 700 families Nomads.

*Q. *Elia.* ? families. Nomads.

*R. *Isiadat.* 85 families. Nomads.

* S. *Terkan.* 700 families. Nomads.
* T. *Nasrian.* 75 families. Nomads.
* U. *Tchuvan.* 210 families. Nomads.
* V. *Sartan.* 80 families. Nomads near Ras-ul-Ain.
* W. *Usbakhan.* 70 families. Nomads.
* X. *Matmieh.* 800 families. Nomads.
* Y. *Chemikan.* 250 families. Nomads.
* Z. *Barguhan.* 130 families. Nomads.
*Ax. *Hisulieh.* 550 families. Nomads.
*Bx. *Chiaresh.* ? families. Nomads.
*Cx. *Zirofkan.* 2,000 families. Semi-nomads of the Karaja Dagh.
*Dx. *Daghbashi.* ? families. A large semi-nomadic tribe east of Suverek.
*Ex. *Bujak.* ? families. Nomads.
*Fx. *Hoshian.* ? families. Nomads.
(?)*Gx. *Beski.* 800 families. Apparently sedentary. A curious legend of this tribe is that they are of English or Frank origin and that their ancient name was *Salargan.* With reserve I suggest the name *Lusignan*, and as an explanation that some member of that house once had dealings with the tribe or took refuge in its tents.
*Hx. *Hajji Manli.* 500 families. Nomads. No horses, travel small stages with donkeys.
* Ix. *Kassiani.* 500 families. Sedentary.
* Jx. *Chakali.* 1,000 families. Nomads.
*Kx. *Merdis.* 1,000 families. Sedentary, I think.
* Lx. *Eutergech.* ? families. Nomads.
*Mx. *Janbeg.* ? families. Sedentary; obviously a fragment of No. 18, section F.
* Nx. *Beyleyan Porga.* 500 families. Sedentary.
* Ox. *Derejan.* 800 families. Nomads.
* Px. *Kao.* 5,000 families. Nomads and sedentary.
* Qx. *Mulikan.* 500 families. I do not know if nomad or sedentary.
*Rx. *Derejan.* ? families. Possibly a separate branch of No. 10x, section C, or perhaps only the summer quarters of that tribe.

2. *Karagetch.* 1,700 families. This is the name of a low tribe of semi-nomads dwelling near Suverek; brutal, savage, and indescribably filthy. This tribe has had a bad name in every respect, and being on a high road gets a bad name for Kurds from many travellers. Curiously enough many of the Karagetch speak Zaza, but between Diarbekir and the Tur Abdin there is a vast

quantity of nameless non-tribal Kurds, who apparently are outcasts from their own clans; the worst of these "undesirables" seem to attach themselves to the Karagetch.[1]

3. *Non-tribal Zazas.* For an account see No. 23, section B.
4. *Chaikessen.* ? families.
5. *Barhan.* ? families.
6. *Hasseran.* ? families.
7. *Abu Tahir.* ? families. These are said to be of Arab origin but talk Kermanji.

*8. *Givran.* ? families. Sub-tribe of No. 1, section C. (Accidentally left out of the letters.)

9. *Eimerzan.* ? families. This is a doubtful tribe.
10. *Chichichieh* (*Kiki*) (*Kikieh*). 1,200 families. This is a large tribe of semi-nomadic Kurds, now inhabiting the slopes of the Karaja Dagh in winter (in villages) and descending in the Jagh-Jagh river in spring and early summer. Their chiefs state that they are the descendants of an Emir sent to rule the Diar *Erabieh* by the Abbasid Caliphs. When the Caliphate grew weak this family remained and was taken by the Kikieh Kurds as a ruling family. The local Bedawin look on this family of chiefs as men of good blood. The chiefs have a notable contempt for their tribesmen, whom they talk of as "Kurdish Dogs," and, I believe, will not marry their women. The chief Agha of the Kikieh, Abdur Rahman, is a well read man, and has done a good deal of work with a view to locating the ancient cities on the banks of the Khabur; he has read a certain amount of history, and states that the Kikieh were one of the last remnants of the sedentary population of the Jazirah, that they were driven north by the Shammar, and only come south with the object of showing their rights of settlement in event of further re-establishment of agriculture in the northern Jazirah.
11. *Dakhori.* ? families. A small migration from Shernakh.

[1] *Karagetch.* This tribe was originally a nomad Turcoman clan of western Anatolia and was settled by Sultan Selim on the slopes of the Karaja Dagh. The object of this transfer was to compensate Kurdistan for the loss of the Ziriki, Tirikan and other tribes which the Ottoman government had forcibly settled in western Anatolia. The Karagetch, however, rapidly intermarried with local non-tribal Kurds of low origin, and being illiterate soon lost their language and became to all intents and purposes a Kurdish tribe. Further, owing to the fact that for some years after their re-settlement they were protected and favoured by the Ottoman government, many families of local nomadic Kurds joined their encampment and so helped not only to increase their numbers but to complete the transformation of the Turcoman clan into a Kurdish tribe.

12. *Bunesi.* ? families. I think this tribe does not exist, but as travellers have reported it I give the name.
13. *Mirsinan.* ? families. No particulars obtainable.
14. *Surkishli.* 900 families. Sedentary. This tribe is said to speak the dialect of Baban Kurds; if so, perhaps, connected with Surchi, No. 9, section A.
15. Under this number I have grouped the Moslem, Yezidi and Christian tribes of the Tur Abdin.

A. *Mizizakh.* 390 families. Tur Abdin. Moslem. Kurds.
B. *Saur.* ? families. Tribe of the Tur Abdin; mixed Christians and Moslems; speak Arabic.
C. *Mahalemi.* 800 families. This tribe has a peculiar history. They state that 350 years ago they were Christians. During a famine of corn they asked the Patriarch permission to eat meat during Lent. The Patriarch refused, and they became Moslems. They speak a bastard Arabic, and the women wear red clothes and do not veil. Ibrahim Pasha says they are now a mixed race of Arabs and Kurds. Some families are still supposed to be Christians.
D. *Haruna.* 750 families. Sedentary Kurds; 90 of the families are Jacobite Christians.
E. *Del Mamikan.* ? families. A tribe of the Tur Abdin; speak bastard Arabic.
F. *Domana.* 180 families. Tribe of the Tur Abdin; Christians and Moslems.
G. *Dorkan.* 120 families. Tribe of the Tur Abdin mountain, composed of Yezidis and Moslems.
H. *Moman.* 600 families. Moslems, speak Kermanji; 90 families are Christians, also three of the tribal leaders.
I. *Haverka.* 1,800 families. Half Christians, half Moslem, speak Kermanji. I suspect some connection with the Haweri Yezidis, No. 48, section A.
J. *Salahan.* ? families.
K. *Girgiri.* 500 families. Tent-dwelling agriculturists; talk Kermanji, but said to be of Arabian origin.
L. *Dasikan.* 900 families. Yezidis, Moslems and Christian; speak Kermanji; Tur Abdin.
M. *Alian.* 1,200 families. Christians, Moslems and Yezidis; language, I think, Kermanji.
N. *Mizidagh.* ? families. See No. 15A. I suspect these to be a small nomadic section of No. 15A, who live close at hand.

16. *Yezidis of the Sinjar.*

A. *Bumteywit.* ? families. A tribe of Arabs living in a state of serfdom to the Yezidis of the Sinjar.

B. *Mirkan.* ? families. Sedentary.
C. *Samuga.* ? families. Dwell in tents near the Sinjar; I suspect the name of this tribe is derived from the locality in which they live.
D. *Beit-el-Khulta.* ? families. Sedentary.
E. *Hababa.* ? families. Sedentary.
F. *Kiran.* ? families. Tent dwellers in Sinjar; there are some other Moslem Kiran which have been noted. See No. 1, section C.
G. *Beled.* ? families. Sedentary Yezidis dwelling near the town of Beled Sinjar, and go by this name.
H. *Bekiran.* ? families. Sedentary; perhaps a section of the Bekiran near Diarbekir.
I. *Mendikan.* 300 families. A tribe of nomadic Yezidis between Tell Afar and Beled. A certain number of the Mendikan are Moslems, and do not intermarry with the Yezidis. I could not ascertain whether they were Arabs who had attached themselves to the Mendikan or not. At any rate on all matters of business they are on good terms with their devil-worshipping fellow tribesmen. I may note that Father Chamich's *History of Armenia* makes frequent mention of the Mandukanians.

17. *Alush.* 200 families. A tribe of outcasts and refugees under a Kurd chief; language Arabic.
18. *Berazieh.* 9,000 families. A branch of the Berizanli, No. 6A, section D, who have migrated at an unknown period to Seruj in northern Mesopotamia. This is a confederation of the following tribes:—

| | Families. |
|---|---|
| *Keytkan* | 700 |
| *Shaykhan* | 600 |
| *Okian* | 700 |
| *Shadadan* | 700 |
| *Alidinli* | 700 |
| *Ma'afan* | 700 |
| *Zerwan* | 500 |
| *Pijan* | 800 |
| *Karagetchan* | 500 |
| *Dinan* | 1,000 |
| *Mir* | 1,000 |
| *Didan* | 300 |

The fact that the Karagetchan appear in this list does not prove that the rest of the confederation should date their settlement at Seruj from post-Selim times. Their tradition is that

they hail from Lake Van, whence they came during a famine year. They are now partly "Arabised," and many wear Arab dress and have adopted Arab speech. They are partly complete nomads, partly completely sedentary, and partly semi-nomadic. They have rather a bad reputation for freebooting, but are industrious and intelligent.

## SECTION D

The tribes inhabiting this zone are extremely complicated in organisation, and very difficult to order and catalogue. As far as I can see they seem to fall into three classes.

*Class I.*—Nos. 6, 6A, 8, 9 to 13, 17, 23, 24.

These tribes are of a distinct and distinguishable race of tall, heavily built men, of surpassing ugliness of face and peculiar uncouthness of behaviour. Many travellers have generalised from them and imagine all Kurds to resemble them.

They are seemingly true nomads by instinct, and lack capacity of any kind for either war or agriculture, they appear at once stupid and treacherous, disloyal, rapacious and quarrelsome. However, they must have some qualities which are not apparent, since they seem to have been the masters of the country which they inhabit long before the government of Constantinople had any power there. Their traditions state that they originally came from Diarbekir, and were at one time either Armenian Christians or worshippers of fire. In many cases they have affiliated local tribes to themselves, notably the Jibranli, No. 8. But the affiliated tribesmen such as the Bellikan, No. 8I, are very easy to distinguish by physiognomy alone. A peculiar custom subsists among them as their women shave the hair of the scalp in a tonsure-like form. They are all orthodox Sunnis.

*Class II*, in which I would include Nos. 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E, 8F, 8G, 8H, 8I, 9A, 18, 19. These tribes I am inclined to look on as the original shepherd tribes of the region, who inhabited it before Class I entered the district; they are usually small, fine-featured, inoffensive people, with no very salient characteristics.

The Mamakanli are the most interesting in this division, for details see catalogue.

*Class III.*—I would suggest that Nos. 7, 16, and 16A are bodies of exiles sent from their native places by Sultan Selim the conqueror of Erzerum.

*Class IV.*—The remainder of the tribes in this region of whom I can give no details.

1. *Penjinan.* ? families. Nomads. Summer quarters, a few villages in the vicinity ; call themselves Penjinan, No. 2, section B.
2. *Silukan.* ? families.
3. *Chukurli.* ? families.
4. *Azli.* ? families.
5. *Lolanli.* 480 families. Shia section.
6. *Hassananli.* 3,300 families. A large tribe owning 110 villages in the districts of Khinis, Melasgird and Varto. Some of the members of this tribe are semi-nomadic, but have been gradually abandoning their tents of late years.

6A. *Berizanli.* 900 families. This is a sub-tribe of the Hassananli ; all are now sedentary.

7. *Isoli.* ? families. Some near Lake Van, possibly a fragment of the Hisulieh, No. 1Ax, section C.
8. *Jibranli.* 2,000 families. This is a tribe and confederation of 8 tribes as follows :—

A. *Mukhel.* ? families.
B. *Arab Agha.* ? families.
C. *Torini.* ? families.
D. *Aliki.* ? families.
E. *Asdini.* ? families.
F. *Sheykhekan.* ? families.
G. *Mamagan.* ? families. Probably connected with the Mamakanli, see No. 9A, section D.
H. *Shaderli.* ? families. Shias. A break off from No. 1C, section E.
I. *Bellikan.* 6,000 families. Zaza-speaking Kurds, Shias.

The tradition of the Jibranli is as follows:—They lived in Arabistan (this to a northern Kurd may mean Diarbekir) three months in houses, nine months in tents each year. A certain Assad Pasha ordered them to go to Bingol, near Mush. The Jibranli are now rapidly becoming completely sedentary. It seems pretty clear to me that this tribe is composed of the Jibranli and fractions of others who have separated from their own clans. These, I expect, were the original inhabitants of the mountains before the arrival of the Jibranli, by whom even now they are roughly treated, and apparently live in a kind of vassalage to them. The Bellikan are somewhat more independent of the Jibranli and keep to themselves. The Jibranli women shave the top of their heads as do the men. The men wear the most extraordinary

clothes, something after the fashion of East-end costermongers, pearl buttons, black velvet collar and cuffs, baggy trousers, sash, and, among the well-to-do, a collar and tie; on the head is worn an enormous white felt tarbush about 1 foot high bulging out like a busby; around this is turned a very small turban of silk. These are the only Kurds I have seen who dress in this way; I expect the costume, except for the tarbush, is a modern development. Another peculiarity of the Jibranli is that they wear carefully trimmed mutton-chop whiskers and long hair; the whole combination is more than fantastic. I might add that the Jibranli in appearance resemble the Haideranli, being grotesquely ugly.

9. *Sipikanli.* 3,000 families. This is a base tribe dwelling north of Lake Van, they have the same rough manners as the Haideranli.

A. *Mamakanli.* ? families. Now count as a sub-tribe of the Sipikanli; they have been stated by some to be the ancient Mamagonians of the Armenian histories.

10. *Zirikanli.* 6,000 families. A tribe similar in all respects to the Jibranli, No. 8, section D, save it is one block tribe, as far as I know, with no proper subdivisions. I could not ascertain whether they also reckoned themselves from Arabistan. They were nomadic, but have settled during the last 10 years.

11. *Rashwan.* 70 families. Nomads.

12. *Bazikli.* 70 families. Nomads.

13. *Putikanli.* ? families. Near Kighi. Kermanji. Sedentary.

14. *Girdi.* ? families. Evidently a migration from No. 7, Section A.

15. *Pisianli.* 700 families. Kermanji. Sedentary.

16. *Shaykh Bezeini.* 450 families. Two or three sedentary villages near Erzerum, obviously a migration from No. 3, section A.

A. *Shaykh Bezeini.* ? families. Reported to be some near Tortwin, a migration from No. 3, section A.

17. *Zilanli.* ? families.

18. *Badeli.* ? families. At Alashgerd. Shias.

19. *Shaderli.* ? families. A few semi-nomads at Alashgerd. Shias.

20. *Bashmanli.* ? families. Same as No. 56, section A? There are said to be many of this tribe in Persia, similar to, and connected with, No. 56, section A.

21. *Hamdikan.* ? families.

22. *Manuranli.* ? families.

23. *Haideranli.* 20,000 families. The largest Kurdish tribe in existence to be met with from Mush to Urumia. The whole tribe are a low, rough race of people of no merit either as soldiers, agriculturists or shepherds.
24. *Adamanli.* 1,800 families. Semi-nomadic.
25. *Yezidis.* I was unable to discover the name of this tribe, who are devil-worshippers.

## SECTION E

This zone, which lies between the Kizil Irmak and the Euphrates, presents the traveller with a picture totally different from any other in Kurdistan. The Kurds have a different position, and no observer could imagine they belonged to the same race as those described in the preceding catalogues; however, the dialects correspond pretty closely, though a Kurd from section A would find great difficulty in making himself understood. The tribes fall fairly easily into four classes:—

Class I. Containing all Kurds included in No. 1 and its appendant letters.
Class II. No. 2 and its appendant letters.
Class III. No. 3 and other tribes in its vicinity whom I have been unable to catalogue.
Class IV. The remaining numbers.

With regard to Class I, the Kurds in this division are completely sedentary, build fine villages, are industrious and intelligent, peaceful, but extremely treacherous, and on occasion ruthless and cruel. Fair hair and blue eyes are not uncommon among them; the men are generally short but handsome, and very submissive in their demeanour. To each of these tribes are attached certain families of nomads, all extremely poor, dark skinned and repulsively ugly, who claim common origin with the village dwellers.

The whole of Class I are reputed Shias, but undoubtedly have a secret religion.

*Class II* stands by itself, and I must refer the student to the catalogue.

*Class III*, the Sinaminli, I have been inclined to connect with the Milan tribes Nos. 1Hx to 1Rx, section C.

However, I have come to the conclusion that this would be a mistake. Police and government officials count them all as Kizilbash Kurds, but I am inclined to think the Sinaminli are

really exiles from Azerbaijan. They are complete Shias, but certainly have no Pagan rites or secrets.

They are fine, handsome people, good farmers, literate, and very artistic in the painting of the interior of their houses.

*Class VI* are, generally speaking, nomads from Diarbekir or Lake Van, who have drifted down the Taurus slopes toward the Mediterranean.

They are now settling down as sedentary agriculturists, or hire themselves out as shepherds. The shepherds dwell in tents with stone walls in winter, tents in summer, and bowers in autumn, they are kind and hospitable; and have a good reputation.

1. *Kureshli.* 2,000 families. Speak Kermanji; Shias or Pantheists. These Kermanji-speaking Kurds of the north are an utterly different race from any of the foregoing tribes; they are a handsome, quiet people, who detest orthodox Moslems, and are always very reserved and quiet in the presence of the latter; they seem to have no predatory or nomadic instincts at all, but behind their silent demeanour there is a strange, savage spirit, which I have noticed among no other Kurds. They are excellent farmers and much inclined to philosophic speculation, this latter point is curious since they are seemingly illiterate. Another point in which they differ from all other Kurds is their peculiarly quiet manners and lack of humour.

A. *Balabranli* (*small*). 60 families. Shias in name; dwell on the opposite bank of the Euphrates; curiously enough these people talk the Kermanji dialect. Seemingly they are more akin to the Badeli, No. 1D and No. 1C, section E, in appearance than to the Dersimli.

B. *Balabranli* (*great*). 500 families. A little south of Erzinjan, Zaza-speaking, Shias in name, apparently Pantheists.

C. *Shaderli.* 3,000 families. Shias or Pantheists, a type similar to, but lower than, the Kureshli; live in underground houses; very poor agriculturists.

D. *Badeli.* 700 families. Kermanji. Shias, semi-nomadic. There are said to be a few near Rowandiz.

2. *Kochkiri.* 10,000 families. This is a very peculiar tribe, or perhaps one might almost call them a separate nation. The men and women are of a peculiar type, being dark with finely-chiselled features, and resembling no other Kurdish race. Their language is seemingly a dialect of Kurdish, but hardly comprehensible to Zazas or Baba

Kurds, or Diarbekir Kermanjis. In religion I take them to be advanced Pantheists, who recognise nature as a female principal and God as a male. This opinion I give with every reservation as the result of interpreted conversations with well-to-do elders. The Kochkiri are miserable farmers, and dwell in semi-underground dwellings similar to those in the Mush plain and north of Lake Van. A fact made the more peculiar when one notices that the Armenians and Moslems, who live near the Kochkiri, live in well built villages with hewn stone houses. The Kochkiri tradition is that they lived on the Dersim but were driven thence by the present mountaineers. The Kochkiri are an unwarlike people who bear no arms, and are extremely submissive. The Moslems say that they are treacherous and have very little regard for human life. I am inclined to believe that many Kochkiri inhabit the little known district north of the Sivas–Zara road. I had not time to make further investigations.

The divisions of the Kochkiri are as follows:—

A. *Sarolar*
B. *Barlolar* } in the vicinity of Karajaran.
C. *Garoalar*
D. *Ibolar.* In the vicinity of Hamobad.
E. *Eski Kochkiri* (*old*). 400 families. This is a tribe near Erzinjan who the Kochkiri say have no connection with them but were driven out of Kochkiri district by tribes Section E., No. 2, A, B, C, D, from which we may infer that Kochkiri is not the real name of Section E., No. 2, or A, B, C, D.

3. *Sinaminli.* 2,500 families. This is a large tribe of real Shias dwelling in the vicinity of Malatia. These are true Shias and by report their dialect more nearly approaches modern Persian than that of any other of the Kurds. They are very friendly to Europeans and strangers, a fact that may have given rise to the idea that all Shias or Kizilbash are so, but I have had bitter experience to the contrary.

4. *Kurejik.* ? families. This sounds an unlikely name.

5. *Al Khass.* 500 families. There is a mountain called Al Khass, south-east of Aleppo, from which this tribe may have taken its name.

6. *Kodir Zor.* 600 families.

7. *Kara Hassan.* 300 families. This may be a Turkoman tribe; see De Guignes' *Index of Names* to the *Histoire des Huns.*
8. *Chughrishanli.* 500 families. Probably sedentary.
9. *Nederli.* ? families.
10. *Doghanli.* 250 families. Nomads.
11. *Dellianli.* ? families. A small tribe of nomads near Marash.
12. *Jellikanli.* ? families. Some at Van, others in the Marash plain. Latter are poor shepherds.
13. *Lek Kurdi.* ? families. This is a small tribe near Adana; they are said to speak Turkish. The name is familiar to Kurds on the Persian border, who say there are some in the Persian dominions.
14. *Delli Kanli.* 200 families. A small tribe of nomads of the Marash plain, the men are tall and well built, the women good looking. These people live in ordinary Kurdish tents in summer on the Taurus slopes, in winter they proceed to fixed camps about 30 miles west of Killis. The fixed camps have stone walls for the tents. This applies equally to Nos. 10, 11, and 12, and No. 1Hx in section C.
15. *Bellikanli.* 250 families. Complete nomads. Kermanji dialect; rove about the Marash valley; no horses.

## SECTION F

This zone is quite outside Kurdistan proper, and represents the various forcible migrations of tribes from all parts of Kurdistan undertaken by Sultan Selim the conqueror. The catalogue will give approximate points from whence they came.

Interest is given to the matter by the following trifle which I remarked. Near Angora I met men from tribes Nos. 15 and 17, they wore a similar dress and turban, the turban being twisted in a peculiar manner. Near Erzinjan I remarked the same peculiar turban, which I had not seen elsewhere, being worn by certain Turks. I asked them what was the meaning of this head-dress, whereupon they replied that they were descendants of Janissaries who had been given lands by Sultan Selim after his conquest. A visit to the Museum of the Janissaries and reference to some prints of Sultan Selim's period showed me that this turban, which has now gone out of fashion, was the common head-dress of that day.

The reason it is worn by these two colonies is obvious. The descendants of the Janissaries were isolated from other Turks and observed the fashion of their fathers. The tribesmen in Anatolia had evidently adopted or been obliged to adopt Turkish dress soon after being exiled, but being an isolated people did not follow the changing fashions of later times.

1. *Ukhchicemi.* 300 families. Sedentary.

2. *Urukchili.* 400 families. These may be Yuruks.

*3. *Milli.* 20 families. A small band of shepherds I met near Osmanjik; they said they were Milli, and have evidently come from either the Dersim or Karaja Dagh.

4. *Shaykh Bezeini.* 120 families. Nomads living near Boiabad in Anatolia; say they were driven there from No. 3, section A, by Sultan Selim. Wear Anatolian dress and now talk Kermanji dialect.

5. *Sheveli.* ? families. A forcible migration from No. 71E, section A.

6. *Badeli.* 200 families. Sedentary branch, have settled near Yuzghat; these are now orthodox Moslems and date their conversion 70 years back. I presume a forcible migration from No. 1D, section E.

7. *Hajji Banli.* 300 families. Semi-nomadic, sub-tribe of No. 1, section C. A forcible migration from the Dersim or Karaja Dagh.

A. *Khatun Oghli.* 400 families. Semi-nomadic, sub-tribe of No. 1, section C, from Karaja Dagh. (Possibly Turkomans.)

B. *Makhani.* 300 families. Semi-nomadic, sub-tribe of No. 1, section C, from Karaja Dagh.

C. *Omaranli.* 800 families. Semi-nomadic, sub-tribe of No. 1, section C, from Karaja Dagh.

8. *Barakatli.* 1,000 families.

9. *Tabur Oghli.* 300 families. Semi-nomadic, might be Turkomans, but I was assured they were not.

10. *Shaykh Bezeini.* ? families. Reported to be some near Alashgerd, a migration from No. 3, section A.

11. *Judi Kanli.* 200 families. Perhaps a migration from Jebel Judi, near Shernakh.

12. *Khalkani.* 400 families. The name of a tribe now extinct which used to live near Rowandiz.

13. *Seif Kani.* 500 families. Semi-nomadic.

14. *Nasurli.* 600 families.

15. *Tirikan.* 400 families. A colony of Kurds planted north of the railway line, about 24 miles west of Angora; for origin see No. 9, section B.

16. *Atmanikan.* ? families. A small section reported in tents near Angora, probably a forcible migration from No. 58, section A.
17. *Zirikanli.* 500 families. Near Angora, migration from No. 10, section D.
18. *Janbekli.* 5,000 families. Mixed, nomads, semi-nomads and sedentary; expelled by Selim from No. 1Mx, section C (the most westerly Kurds).

# ALPHABETICAL LIST OF TRIBES


Abbasinli. Sec. B, 31H.
Abu Tahir. Sec. C, 7.
Acu. Sec. A., 23.
Adamanli. Sec. D, 24.
Alan. Sec. A, 16 ; Sec. A, 76E.
Alian. Sec. C, 15M.
Alidinli. Sec. C, 18.
Alikanli. Sec. A, 62.
Aliki. Sec. D, 8D.
Al Khass. Sec. E, 5.
Alush. Sec. C, 17.
Arab Agha. Sec. D, 8B.
Asdini. Sec. D, 8E.
Ashaghi. Sec. A, 38.
Ashmishart. Sec. B, 25.
Atmanikan. Sec. A, 58 ; Sec. F, 16.
Azli. Sec. D, 4.

Badeli. Sec. A, 30 ; Sec. D, 18 ; Sec. E, 1D ; Sec. F, 6.
Bakhtiarli. Sec. B, 31E.
Baki Khassa. Sec. A, 17.
Balabranli. Sec. E, 1A and B.
Balashaghi. Sec. B, 31I.
Balian. Sec. A, 56.
Baliki. Sec. A, 27.
Baradost. Sec. A, 33 and A, 33A.
Barakatli. Sec. F, 8.
Barguhan. Sec. C, 1Z.
Barhan. Sec. C, 5.
Barkoshan. Affil. to A, 73.
Barlolar. Sec. E, 2B.
Bashmanli. Sec. D, 20.
Bazikli. Sec. D, 12.
Bederi. Sec. B, 16.
Behirmaz. Sec. B, 30.
Beit-el-Khulta. Sec. C, 16D.
Bejwan. Sec. A. 10.
Bekiran. Sec. C, 16H.
Bekran. Sec. B, 6.
Beled. Sec. C, 16G.
Bellicar. Sec. A, 67.
Bellikan. Sec. D, 8I.
Bellikanli. Sec. E, 15.
Berazieh. Sec. C, 18.
Berizanli. Sec. D, 6A.
Beroz. Sec. A, 76F.
Berwari. Sec. A, 44.
Berzan. Sec. A, 34.
Besheri. Sec. B, 8.
Beski. Sec. C, 1Gx.
Beyleyan Porga. Sec. C, 1Nx.
Bilbas. Sec. A, 22.
Billijan. Affil. to Sec. A, 73.
Bosikan. Sec. B, 18.
Bubanli. Sec. B, 20B.
Bujak. Sec. C, 1Ex.
Bumteywit. Sec. C, 16A.
Bunesi. Sec. C, 12.
Butan. Sec. A, 71D.

Chaikessen. Sec. C, 4.
Chakali. Sec. C, 1Jx.
Chemikan. Sec. C, 1Y.
Chiaresh. Sec. C, 1Bx.
Chichichieh. Sec. C, 10.
Chughrishanli. Sec. E, 8.
Chukurli. Sec. D, 3.

Daghbashi. Sec. C, 1 Dx.
Dakhori. Sec. A, 54 ; Sec. C, 11.
Danan. Sec. C, 1A.
Dashi. Sec. C, 1K.
Dasikan. Sec. C, 15L.
Daudieh. Sec. A, 1.
Del Mamikan. Sec. C, 15E.
Dellianli. Sec. E, 11.
Delli Kanli. Sec. E, 14.
Dere. Sec. A, 43.

Derejan. Sec. C, 1Ox and C, 1Rx.
Dersimli. Sec. B, 31.
Didan. Sec. C, 18.
Dinan. Sec. C, 18.
Doghanli. Sec. E, 10.
Domana. Sec. C, 15F.
Dorkan. Sec. C, 15G.
Doshki. Sec. A, 41, and A, 41A.
D'sdie. Sec. A, 2.
Duderi. Sec. A, 61.
Dudikanli. Sec. C, 1D.

Eimersan. Sec. C, 9.
Eiru. Sec. A, 57.
Elia. Sec. B, 29; C, 1Q.
El Kawat. Sec. C, 1J.
Erikli. Sec. B, 20F.
Eski Kochkiri. Sec. E, 2E.
Eutergetch. Sec. C, 1Lx.
Ezdinan. Sec. A, 76A.

Ferhad Ushaghi. Sec. B, 31D.

Garoalar. Sec. E, 2C.
Gavdan. Sec. A, 76N.
Gewiji. Affil. to Sec. A, 73.
Ghowruk. Sec. A, 19.
Girdi. Sec. A, 7, and A, 7A; Sec. D, 14.
Girgiri. Sec. C, 15K.
Givran. Sec. A, 74; Sec. B, 31L; Sec. C, 8.
Goyan. Sec. A, 53.
Guran. Sec. A, 13.
Gurus. Sec. B, 27.

Hababa. Sec. C, 16E.
Hafjan. Sec. A, 76Q.
Haideranli. Sec. D, 23.
Hajji. Divn. of Sec. A, 32.
Hajji Bairam. Sec. C, 1N.
Hajji Banli. Sec. F, 7.
Hajji Manli. Sec. C, 1Hx.
Halaji. Sec. A, 63.
Hamawand. Sec. A, 11.
Hamdikan. Sec. D, 21.
Hartushi. Sec. A, 76.
Haruna. Sec. C, 15D.
Hassananli. Sec. D, 6.
Hassanekan. Sec. C, 1O.
Hasseina. Sec. A, 39; Sec. A, 51.
Hasseran. Sec. C, 6.
Haverka. See. C, 15I.
Hawatan. Sec. A, 65.
Haweri. Sec. A, 48.

Herki. Sec. A, 32.
Hisulieh. Sec. C, 1Ax.
Hoshian. Sec. C, 1Fx.

Ibolar. Sec. E, 2D.
Isiadat. Sec. C, 1R.
Isoli. Sec. D, 7.

Jaff. Sec. A, 12.
Janbekli. Sec. F, 18.
Janbeg. Sec. C, 1Mx.
Jellali. Sec. A, 42; Sec. B, 14.
Jelli. Affil. to A, 73.
Jellikanli. Sec. E, 12.
Jibranli. Sec. D, 8.
Jiriki. Sec. A, 76G.
Judi Kanli. Sec. F, 11.

Kalendelan. Sec. C, 1M.
Kao. Sec. C, 1 Px.
Karabanli. Sec. B, 31F.
Karagetch. Sec. C, 2.
Karagetchan. Sec. C, 18.
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